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## ERRATA

Page 1, *for* the last two lines of footnote *read* :—

1666 A.D. Extracts published in Pares Chandra Banerji's *Bangla Puravritta*.

(d) The *Satyanarayan* song of Ayodhyarama composed 1726 A.D. Unpublished MS. with Sasibhusan Pathak of Dakshin-Barasat 24-Parganas Dist.

For extracts see pp. 15-17.

Page 14, l. 8, *after* the second bracket *add* :—and his Nalanda grant (IV R.S. *Monographs* No. 1, p. 26)

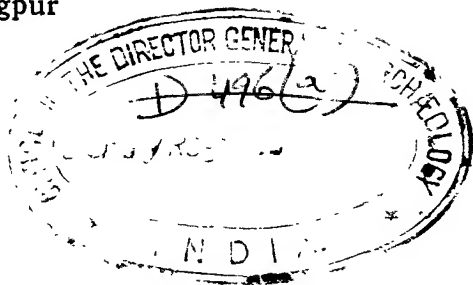
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# Varendra Research Society's Monographs

No. 4

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VARENDRA RESEARCH SOCIETY  
RAJSHAHI, BENGAL

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July, 1930.

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## NOTE

It was originally intended to append these four articles to our Annual Report for the year 1929-30. But, as they are considered to be of permanent value, they are published as our Monograph No. 4, in which form they will be readily available to the public.

The Society acknowledges with gratitude that Rai Bahadur Surendra Nath Bhaduri of Gwalior has generously contributed the entire cost of this publication.

Varendra Research Society,  
*July, 1930.*

BIJAYNATH SARKAR,  
*Hon. Secretary.*

Published by Bijaynath Sarkar, Hon. Secretary  
Varendra Research Society  
Rajshahi, Bengal.  
Printed by Jyotish Chandra Ghosh, at the Cotton Press  
57, Harrison Road, Calcutta.

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Antiquities of North-west Sundarban/

By Kalidas Dutt, Majilpur, 24-Parganas District.

In my account of the antiquities of Khari (Appendix I, *Annual Report* of the Varendra Research Society, 1928-29) I have noted how in the course of the reclamation work which is going on in the 'Sundarban' or southern part of the 24-Parganas District, since the eighties of the 18th century, many remains of antiquity have come to light, including two copper-plate grants of king Lakshmanasena (12th Century A.D.). These clearly prove that much of the Sundarban was inhabited and in a flourishing condition in those days being traversed by the main course of the Ganges which ran southwards from Calcutta past Kalighat, Baruipur, Jaynagar, Chhatrabhog and then flowed through many winding channels into the sea. It appears from contemporary Bengali poems<sup>1</sup> that this condition continued till the 16th or even the 17th Century. From the scanty mention of riverside villages below Chhatrabhog in all these poems (with the mention, in one of them, of the existence of wild animals and pirates) and the extent of the parganas as recorded in the *Ain-i-Akbari* (1582 A.D.) we may take the present 'Sundarban Embankment' which cuts through the south-east part of Mathurapur *thana* as marking practically the limit of the populated part in the 16th Century. South and east of this we may distinguish the new settlement by their bearing Plot or Lot number, the names attached to a few of them being of recent origin (see Map). But even in these new settlements down to the Sagar Island in the extreme south-west, antiquarian remains are being found proving that they too were inhabited in the olden days.

The Ganges and the Sundarban

The present Hugli river from Sankrail downwards is said to flow in the channel of the old Saraswati (which branched off the Ganges at Tribeni) and it has none of the sacredness of the Ganges. It is not known when exactly

<sup>1</sup> (a) The *Chaitanya-Bhagvat* of Vrindavandas born at Navadvip, 1507 A.D. A temple built by him exists at Denur, P. S. Mantasvar Dist. Burdwan (Dinas Chandra Sen, *Bangabhasa O Sahitya*, 2nd edition p. 319). In this article Atul-krishna Goswami's edition of *C-B* is referred to.

(b) The *Chandi* of Kavi-Kankan Mukandarama born at Damunya on the Ratnana river, in Sihmabad pargana of Burdwan Dist., composed the poem in 1577 A.D. at Atara in Ghatal sub-division, Midnapur Dist. (*B. O. Sahitya*, p. 398). The Indian Press edition is referred to.

(c) The *Ragamangal* of Krishnarama of Nunta, near Belgharia, 24 Parg. Dist. (*B. O. Sahitya* p. 557) born 1666 A.D., unpublished MS. with Babu Sasibhusan Pathak of Dakshin-Barasat, 24-Parg. Dist.

Extracts from these works are appended, pp 15-17.

the Ganges left its southward course below Calcutta and turned westwards to join the Saraswati at Sankrail and form the Hugli. This was probably after the 16th century as the *Ain-i-Akbari* speaks of the Ganges and Saraswati as flowing separately into the sea,<sup>2</sup> although the Calcutta-Sankrail channel appears on De Barros' map (1540). There is a significant provision about the dead Ganges in Raghunandan (15th century) (*Prayaschittatattva, Gangamahatmyam* Serampur, 1834 Ed. I. p. 299):—

प्रवाहमध्ये विच्छेदे तु अन्तःसलिलप्रवाहित्वान्न दोषः अन्यथा इदानीं गङ्गाया सागर-  
गमित्वानुपपत्तेः ।

The Hindus still hold the dead or Adi Ganga from Kalighat downwards as sacred, burning their dead on its banks and using the water of tanks dug in it as Ganges water. According to some<sup>3</sup> this diversion was caused in Nawab Alivardi Khan's time (1740-1756) by the British merchants widening the channel from Calcutta to Sankrail to facilitate navigation.

It appears that at the time of Yuan Chwang's visit (7th century) the Sundarban tract was included in Samatata, while the territory west of it was called Tamralipti which, according to the *Desavali-vivriti* of Jagamohan Pandit (1648 A.D.) extended eastwards up to the Ganges (*vide* H. P. Sastri's address, *Narayana*, Bhadra, 1324 B.S.). From the inscriptions of the Senas (12th century) we find that the Sundarban was included in two of their *bhuktis*, the area east of the old course of the Ganges in Paundravardhana *bhukti* and that west of the river in Vardhamana *bhukti*, through respective *mandalas* and *chaturakas*.

Under the Pathan Sultans who succeeded the Senas, the tract was administered from Satgaon.<sup>4</sup> Under the Mughals from Akbar onwards the whole of the settled part was included in Sarkar Satgaon, and divided according to Todarmal's settlement (1582), modified during Sultan Shuja's regency (1658),

<sup>2</sup> 'Near the place Kazihata, in *sarkar* Barbakabad, the Ganges divides into two parts,—one goes east-wards, and flows into the ocean near Chatgaon, and in this separation the stream is called Padmavati; the other goes southwards, and divides again into three parts, one being called the Saraswati, the other the Jon (or Jamuna) the third Ganga. The three are called in Hindi, Tribeni, and are held in veneration. The third (*i.e.*, the Ganga, the modern Hugli) becomes, near Satgaon, a thousand channels, and then joins, the sea. The Saraswati and the Jamuna also flow into the ocean' On De Barros' map of Bengal (A.D. 1540), the Saraswati and Jamuna are still marked as large branches; on Vanden Broucke's map (1660), the Jamuna is marked as a small *khal*, but the Saraswati is still prominently drawn as a large offshoot *Hunter's Statistical Account of Bengal* Vol. I, p. 361.

<sup>3</sup> *e.g.* the late Sures Chandra Dutt of Uti *vide* his paper on the Geology of Bengal in the *Proceedings of the Bangiya Sahitya Sammilan*, Eighth session, Burdwan.

<sup>4</sup> In the early period of the Muhammadan rule Satgaon was the seat of the Governors of Lower Bengal and a mint town. Its first Governor was Izzuddin, in 1325 A.D. Other residences of Governors were Deokot in Dinajpur, Lakhanati and Sonargaon. These towns lay all near the frontiers of Bengal—Deokot in the north, to keep the rebellious Rajas and aborigines in check Sonargaon protected the eastern frontier, Lakhanati faced the Delhi empire; and Sataon was near the frontier of Orissa (*Hunter* Vol. I. p. 361)

into a number of parganas<sup>5</sup> of which Muragachha is mentioned in a land grant of Aurangzeb preserved at Majilpur. These parganas continue to the present time.

In my previous paper I have given some account of the antiquities in Khari<sup>6</sup> and the neighbouring villages in the Eastern or Paundravardhana section of the Sundarban ; in the present one I propose to deal with those in the northern half of the western or Vardhamana section, the Mouths of the Ganges and the Sagar Island.

### Govindapur

I begin with Govindapur, a village in Sonarpur P. S., some 15 miles south of Calcutta and 2 miles north-west of Baruipur Rly. Station. Here in 1923 was discovered a copper-plate by which king Lakshmanasena (12th Century, A.D.) granted the village of Viddara-sasana in the Betadda *chaturaka* of Paschima-Khatika of Vardhamana *bhukti*. Many of the places mentioned in the grant can be identified, for instance. Viddara-sasana is present Sasan, 3 miles south-east of Govindapur, as the Ganges is said to have formed half its eastern boundary. (*Inscriptions of Bengal* III, p. 97). Dhamnagar north of Sasan is probably the Dharmanagara of the inscription. Betadda, the head-quarters of the *chaturaka* is identified with Betor near Sibpur, opposite Calcutta (R. D. Banerjee, *Bangalar Itihas*, I, p. 335). It was a place of importance even in the 16th century as it is one of the few places marked on De Barros' map, and is mentioned by Kavi-kankan, see p. 16.

At Govindapur on the east bank of an old tank called *Hedopukur* there is a brick mound in which several ornamental bricks have been found. Some of these are with me. About a mile south is the village of **Beral-Baikuntapur** where there are remnants of an old fortress, and further south is **Kalyanpur**

<sup>5</sup> The principal paraganas were (Hunter I, p. 228-240)

(a) Penchakuli (p. 239) in the north contains Falta

(b) Muragachha (p. 237) south of (a) contains Diamond Harbour Kalagachha, Sarisa, Hatugunj etc.

(c) Baridhati (p. 228) east of (b) contains Baruipur, Vishnupur, Magrahat, Jayanagar, Mathurapur. The pargana of Shahnagar is between (b) and (c)

(d) Maidanmal (p. 236) east of (c) round railway line to Port Canning : contains Basta Malang, Ramnagar and Karimabad.

(e) Hatiagarh, north (p. 232) south of (c) and east of (b) contains Chandpur, Jagadipur, Kasinagar, Barasi, Nalua

(f) Hatiagarh, South (p. 232) the most southerly pargana contain Belpukharia, Lakshmipur, Banstala, Gangadharpur and Kalicharanpur

(g) Shahpur (p. 240) between (e) and (f) contains Krishnarampur Lakshmikantapur and Lakshmi Narayanpur

(h) Mayda (p. 237) north east of (c) contains Mayda, Bantra and Shahzadpur

(i) Khari (p. 235) South east of (e)

<sup>6</sup> In p. 4 of that account, I regret, Baribhanga (L : 23) which is south west of Khan is wrongly stated as north of it

where amidst the ruins of an old temple is a Siva-lingam referred to in the *Rayamangal* as Kalyan-Madhava. see p. 17.

### Mainagar

About a mile north-east of Govindapur is the village of Mainagar mentioned by Kavi-kankan. see p. 16.

It is claimed as their original-seat by a large section of Dakshin Rarhi Kayasthas known as Mahinagar Basus.<sup>7</sup> Rajpur and Malancha close to Mainagar are noted centres of the Basu Kayasthas.

### Kuldia

Some 5 miles south-west of Baruipur. in P. S. Magrahat is Kuldia, where a fine Surya image of black stone recovered from a tank and a sand stone plaque of Nrisimha have been collected by me.

The Surya image (Fig. 1) is 1' 10" high and 1' wide and shews Surya standing with a lotus in either of his two hands. His charioteer Aruna is seated between his legs and his two attendants, Danda, carrying a sword and Pingala, a bearded figure holding an ink-pot and pen in his hands stand on either side. A freize at the bottom of the sculpture shows Surya's seven horses, with two female archers dispelling darkness with their arrows. on both sides. Two features of this image deserve special notice *viz.* the temple above Surya's head representing probably his car. and the *vanamala* hanging across his knees. So far as I know, the former feature occurs in only one more image, *viz.*, No. 222 (from Baria, Rajshahi Dist.) in the V. R. S. Museum. and the latter in one other image. *viz.*, that from Kotalipara. Faridpur Dist. in the Sahitya Parisad Museum. Calcutta (*Handbook of Sculptures* Pl. XVII). The Nrisimha plaque (Fig. 2) measures 15"×14"×2½" and being made of stone is a rare specimen.

### Dakshin-Barasat

Some 7 miles south of Kuldia and 3 miles south of Suryapur or Nachangachha we come to Dakshin-Barasat now a Railway Station. P. S. Jaynagar. It is

<sup>7</sup> One of them Mr. Nagendra Nath Basu (editor of the *Visvakosa*) says that the village derives its name from Mahipati Basu who held high office under the Pathan Sultans of Gaur with the title of Subuddhi Khan. Three of his grandsons, Gopinath, Govinda and Vallabh also held high offices under Sultan Hussain Shah of Gaur (1493-1518) with the titles respectively of Purandar Khan, Gandharva Khan and Sundarbar Khan. The first of these was Hussain Shah's revenue minister and admiral of the fleet of which Mahinagar, then in easy communication with Gaur by water, was the base. The second one received a village in free-hold which is identified with Govindapur named after him (*Kayastha Patrika*, Jaistha, 1335 B.S.)

mentioned by Kavikankan and must have been of considerable importance in olden days for just across the river in the village of Sarisadaha a carved monolithic pillar and several fine stone images have been found, such as Vishnu, Nrisimha, a rare Vishnu-chakra (*vide* 'Antiquities of Khari,' p. 12). Barasat is noted at present for its Sivalingam called Adimahesh referred to in the *Rayamangal* as Sadananda and by Ayodhyarama as Anadi-Mahesh though omitted by Kavi-kankan. The present temple is a modern structure but the Lingam must be fairly old as it stands in a pool of water some 10 feet below the level of the surrounding ground. In the Sena-para of Barasat there is a stone image of Parsvanath, the 23rd Tirthankara (Fig. 3) about 3 feet high recovered some years ago in digging a ditch. It appears to be considerably old as it is much weathered and may be compared with the Parsvanath from Raidighi, p. 5, 'Antiquities of Khari'. The Tirthankara is represented as standing naked with a many-hooded snake-head over his head. On either side of him there are four snakes rising from his arm and lower down an attendant, who is indistinct. The pedestal is plain. A unique feature is a *Tanamala* hanging across the knees.

### Baharu and Mayda

Some 2 miles south of Dakshin-Barasat is Baharu, now a Railway station. It is referred to as 'Barn-kshetra' in the *Rayamangal*. Recently a Surya image of black stone about 2 feet high has been found here and is being worshipped as Panchanana by a section of the people.

It is said however that formerly Baharu was a small place, a collection of fishermen's huts, while Mayda near it on the east side of the Ganges was a town of importance being the head-quarters of a revenue pargana as noted before and a port of the Portugese (Sivanath Sastri's *Atmacharita*, p. 1). People are said to have migrated across the river in 1154 B.S. (1748 A.D.) owing to river erosion on the Mayda side. A stone image of dancing Ganes 1½ ft. high (Fig. 4) has been presented to me by Babu Gaur Mohan Banerjee of Mayda. It was found by one of his men in digging a ditch some years ago.

### Jayanagar

This village appears to have come into prominence in the 17th Century for it is first mentioned in the *Rayamangal* while Kavi-kankan omits it.

It has a local epithet of Palābari, which according to Mr. Nagendra Nath Basu is a corruption of Pravāla-dwipa (*Bangar Jatiya Itihas*, Rajanya-Kanda, I, p. 351) Jayanagar derives its name from an image of Jaya-chandi which is said

to have been set up about 300 years ago. A more popular shrine now-a-days is the temple of Radha-Vallabha which contains two wooden images of Radha and Krishna 3 ft. and 4 ft. high respectively. These images are said to have been brought from Khari and set up by Pratapaditya of Jessore. (1582-1611) (*Govt. list of ancient Monuments in Bengal*, p. 51).

In a garden, north of the temple, a fine black stone image of Vishnu 2½ ft. high, now with Babu Gopal Chandra Sarkar, was dug out and in clearing the tank of the temple a stone 'gargoyle' was found which is placed on a Gauripatta in the veranda of the temple and worshipped as a Lingam.

One of the tanks in the dry channel of the Ganges here is called Mitra-Ganga after the Mitra family of zamindars whose houses and Siva temples stand on its west bank. The oldest of these temples is known, from a brick inscription on its face, to have been built in 1683 Saka or 1761 A.D. An interesting feature of it is a freize of miniature temples with *sikharas* and a Siva lingam in each, over the entrance. Two other temples are dated 1771 and 1777 Saka respectively. On one of these there were some erotic figures in moulded bricks as referred to by Hunter in his *Statistical Account of Bengal* I, p. 88. South of Jayanagar is Vishnupur referred to in the *Rayamangal*, see p. 17.

### The Muragachha grant

In the village of Majilpur adjoining Jayanagar, there is a *sanad* of Emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) dated 1071 H. or 1661 A.D. with Babu Amrita Lal Chakravarti. It purports to be the renewal of a previous *sanad* by which 25 bighas of land in pargana Muragachha were conferred as a *Brahmottar* on Ratnesvar Chakravarti. As noted before, Muragachha is the pargana in which Diamond Harbour is situated.

### Ramnathpur or Mandirbazar

Some 8 miles west of Jayanagar is Ramnathpur, P. S. Kulpi, known as Mandirbazar on account of its Siva temple about 100 ft. high—an impressive structure, though much damaged by age and neglect. (Fig. 5). It is called Kesavesvar after its builder. It faces west and is oblong in plan, consisting of a cell in the centre with a wide corridor on three sides. The walls of the cell are carried above the roof of the corridors and are surmounted by an arched roof and *sikhara*. The corridors are roofed over with single arches which are very striking. The face of the temple is ornamented with moulded bricks set in various designs, *e.g.* Vishnu, Mahisha-mardini etc. There are three brick

inscriptions in Bengali script of the same import at three places of the face. The middle one is nearly obliterated ; the side ones read :—

आकाशविरमचौणीमिती शके शिवालये । सुद अकेशवोकार्दिहासुदेवेन शिल्पिना ॥

“ Kesava got this Siva temple built in 1670 Saka year (1748 A.D.) by the architect Vasudeva.” There is a great gathering of pilgrims at Siva-ratri time. end of February (*Gazetteer* of 24-Paraganas p. 78).

One mile east of Mandirbazar, in the *Haurir hat* of Jagadispur, P. S. Kulpi, there are two Siva temples about 50 ft. high of one design (Fig. 6). They are said to be older than the one at Mandirbazar and have *sikharas* of a different pattern, rather resembling that of the Jagannath temple at Serampur or the Vaidyanath temple at Deoghar. Both the temples are much decayed. Each has a door still consisting of a single block of carved black stone, and a lingam about 4 ft. high.

### Netra

About 6 miles north-west of Jagadispur is Netra, a Railway station, P. S. Diamond Harbour from which I have recently obtained a Uma-Mahesvara image of black stone. Fig. 7, discovered some years ago. It measures 2' × 1' 3" and represents Uma seated on the left thigh of Mahesh, who is caressing her, both being seated on a *padmasana*, with one foot resting on their respective *vahanas*, bull and lion, carved below. Mahesh has four arms with two of which he holds Uma while the other two carry a *nilotpala* and a trident. Uma has two arms ; the right one clasps Mahesh and the left one holds a mirror. Both the figures wear ornaments, but are crowned with *jatamukutas*. The back slab is plain except for two Gandharvas carrying garlands.

### Mathurapur

Some six miles south of Jayanagar is Mathurapur, a Police Station. Some time ago several sculptures were unearthed here in digging out a tank. Of these, a mutilated Buddha image in *bhumi-sparsamudra* is lying on the village altar and a fragment of a Surya image is with me. Mathurapur is surrounded by archaeological remains, of which those at Khari, Bakultala and other places east of the Adi-Ganga are described in my previous article.

### Ghatesvar

About two miles south-west of Mathurapur is Ghatesvar, named after its Siva lingam. In excavating a tank some 40 years ago, 3 Jaina images and a stone



sculpture were unearthed. Two of the Jaina images are lost, one being thrown by Babu Karalimohan Chaudhuri into a tank and the other taken away probably to Calcutta. The remaining Jaina image and the sculpture are with me. The latter (Fig. 8) is of fine grained sandstone and measures 13" x 6" x 5" deep and bears a human figure which is unidentified. The Jaina image which is that of Adinath (Fig. 9) is described along with a Parsvanath image from Raidighi and a miniature Naminath from Patharpratima on p. 5 of 'Antiquities of Khari.' Three more Jaina images have recently been discovered viz., one at Dakshin-Barasat one at Kantabenia and the third in Sagar Island.

The occurrence of so many Jaina images indicate the prevalence of the faith in these parts. This probably dates from Yuen Chwang's time (7th century A.D.) as he noted that 'the Digambara Nigrahantas were very numerous' in Samatata (Watters II, p. 187) and Samatata, in Mr. Nanigopal Majumdar's opinion, included the Sundarban at the time of the Senas. (*Inscriptions of Bengal* III, p. 61). Strangely enough, there is no mention of Jainas in Yuan Chwang's account of the neighbouring kingdom of Tamralipti.

At **Lakshmikantapur** now a Railway Station near Ghateswar, a stone image was lately found in the old bed of Banai nadi and is now in the zamindar's *kachari* in Lot No. 18.

### Jalghata

About 3 miles south of Jayanagar, in P. S. Mathurapur, is Jalghata where there is a *kachari* of the late Raja Pyarimohan Mukherji of Uttarpara (Hugli Dist.). In clearing the tank of this *kachari* a few years ago several stone images were found viz. three Vishnus and one Dasa-bhuja Durga which are now in the library at Uttarpara and a Garuda capital which is now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The capital (Fig. 10) is nearly 3 ft. high and has two similar images carved back to back, and was evidently placed in front of some Vishnu image. *vide* rule quoted by Mr. Akshaya Kumar Maitra, *Bharati*, Sravan, 1327, p. 270 n. :

उपेन्द्रस्यागतः पक्षी गुडकेशः कृताञ्जलिः । सव्यजानुगतो भूमौ मुर्धा च फणिमण्डितः ॥  
 स्यूलजङ्घ्यो नरग्रीवस्तुङ्गनासो नराङ्गकः । दिवाहुः पक्षयुक्तश्च कर्त्तव्यो विनतासुतः ॥

### Chhetrabhog

A little eastward of Jalghata is Chhetrabhog in Mathurapur P. S. It is a Sākta centre, the presiding deity being called Tripurasundari with the Ambulinga or Badarikanath of the adjoining village of Barasi as its Bhairava. The temple

of Tripurasundari is a very modern building with flat roof but it houses a *yantra* or emblem and a full-size wooden image of the deity. The *yantra* which is wrapped up in red cloth is a rectangular stone. It is said to have been recovered from the ruins of an old temple at the site. This shrine which is still regarded by the Saktas as one of their *pithas* appears to be an ancient one, probably identical with that named Khari, No. 26 in the list of the 64 Buddhist Tantrika *pithas*, given in the *Dakarnava*, a work of the 10th Century. Khari being a noted place close to it. (Sastri, *Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Government Collection*, 1917, Vol. I, p. 92).

The ancient importance of Chhatrabhog is testified to by the numerous brick mounds, tanks and stone and bronze images found in clearing the forest. Of these the most noteworthy are a mutilated stone Kuvera (Fig. 41) now in the Indian Museum, and a stone Vishnu and a stone miniature Desabhujā Durgā (6"×4") which are with me, and a stone Nrisimha, a bronze Nrisimha and a bronze Ganesa which are in the temple.

Chhatrabhog appears to have been a port in olden days, and recently some iron chains and old planks and masts have been unearthed here. It is said that when the ancient port of Tamruk (V. Smith, *Asoka* p. 79) was closed by the silting of the Rupnarayan, people used to embark at Pichalda (lower down the river and above its present junction with the Hugli-Damodar) and Chhatrabhog (H. P. Sastri, quoted in Jogeshchandra Basu, *Medinipurer Itihas* p. 108). According to the *Chaitanya Bhagvata*, Chaitanya embarked here for Orissa, see p. 16.

### Barasi or Ambulinga

This place adjoining Chhatrabhog is noted for its Siva *lingam*. The origin of the shrine is related in the *Chaitanya-Bhagvata*, see p. 15. The temple which is a modern one contains besides the *lingam*, an ancient bronze Lakshmi and a small stone Bull (Nandi) found in the ruins : a huge *Gauripatta* of black stone is lying in front. Mr. Satis Chandra Mitra says that the *lingam* was installed by King Narendra Gupta in the 7th Century, A.D. but gives no authority in support of his statement (*Jessore-Khulnar Itihas* I, p. 179).

Near Barasi is Chakratirtha where in the dry bed of the Ganges there are three tanks : Chakrakund, Gopalakund and Manikund. There is a *swan-jatra* or bathing festival here on the *Sukla-pratipada* day of Chaitra (March) every year probably referred to by অযুক্তি মহাস্নান in the *Rajamanjal*. The name is derived from the legend that when Bhagirath lost sight of Ganga as they

reached this place, she showed him her *chakra*. This *tirtha* is referred to in Act 4 of the *Prabodh-Chandrodaya* of Krishna Misra, a native of Barh (11th Century) :

**अस्ति राढ़ाभिधानो जनपदस्तैव च भागोरथीतीरपरिसरालङ्कारभूतचक्रतोर्थ**

It is mentioned after Tribeni in the *Varaha-purana* (Bangavasi Edition, Ch. 130).

### Madpur

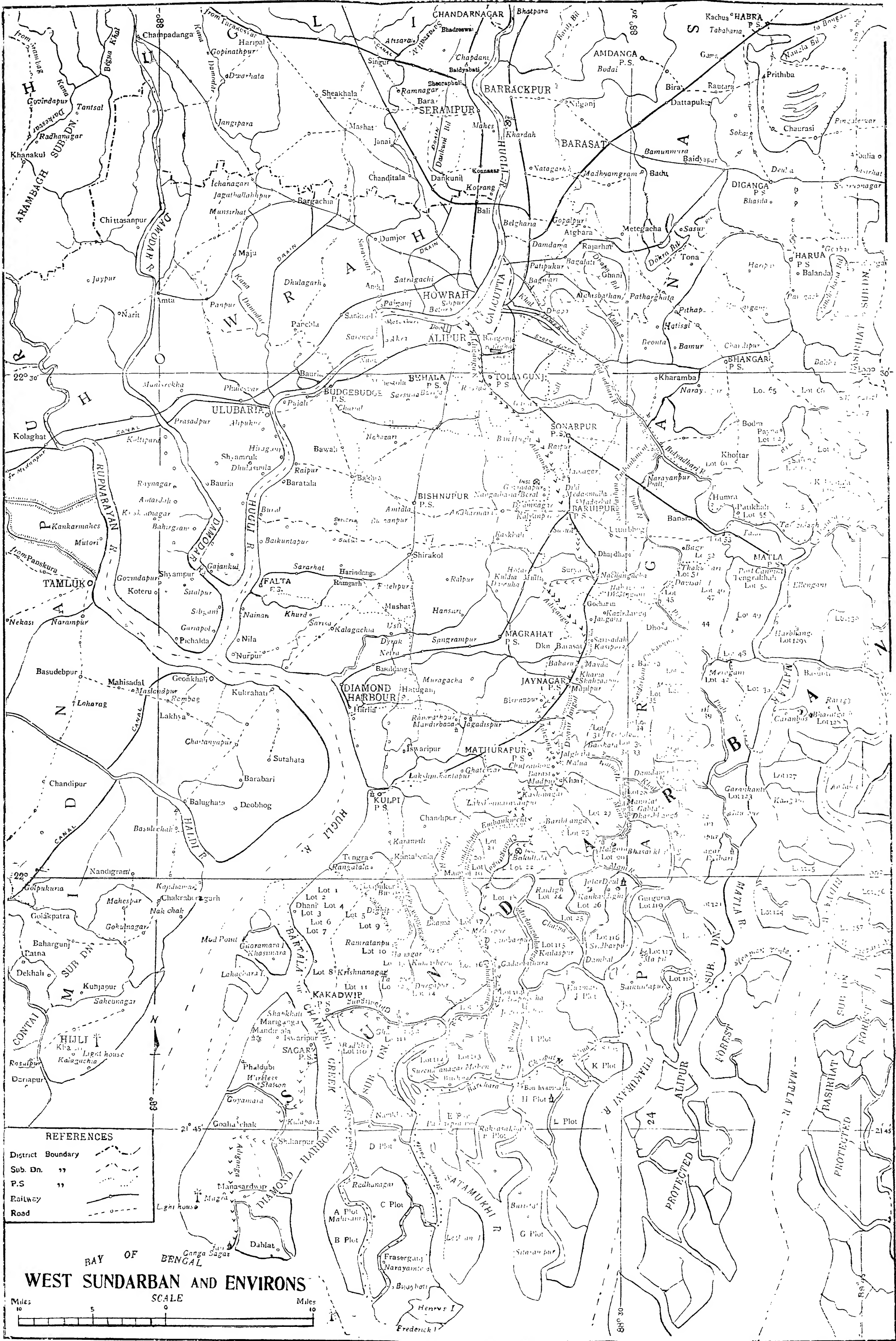
This village lies south of Barasi and some two miles north-west of Khari across the dry channel of the Ganges. A Vishnu image 2½ ft. high of the usual *chaturbhuja* type was found here sometime ago and is kept in the house of Babu Bhutnath Chakravarti.

### The mouths of the Ganges

As the *Chaitanya-Bhagavat* says, the Ganges divided itself into a hundred mouths *i.e.*, branches at Chhatrabhog, and the legends of Ambulinga and Chakra-tirtha confirm this view. This is probably the reason why all the poems are indefinite about the route below Chhatrabhog, Kakadvip or Hatiaghar being practically the only landmark mentioned in any of them. From the *Chaitanya-Bhagavat* we gather that from Chhatrabhog, Chaitanya sailed down the branch which flowed westwards (Kulpi Khal) to Kulpi(?) and landed in Orissa territory somewhere opposite it on the other side of the Rupanarayan, where he took the road to Puri, see p. 16. The branch referred to in the *Chandi* and the other poems is probably the one which flowed southwards past Khari and Bakultala (Lot 22, where a Sena inscription has been found) to Lot 15 and then turned westwards to Kakadvip. This branch is called in its successive reaches the Charaganga, the Gobadia gang and the Ghibati gang, and is believed to be continued across the Baratala creek and traverse the Sagar Island to join the sea at Gangāsagar *sangam* as shewn on the Map by arrow-heads.

### South-West Sundarban

The antiquities described above lie roughly speaking north of a line from Madpur through Lakshmikantapur to Kulpi. South of this line, in the old settled villages of Kantabenia (where a fine Parvath image, two Vishnu images and some carved stones have been found), Karanjali, Malaya, Chandipur, Nakali etc. and the newly opened lots 1 to 20, antiquarian remains are being discovered, as will be described later. Only one of these, a unique Vishnu image I describe here. It has been very kindly presented to me by Babu Dakshina Charan





Banerji of Baruipur. It was found some years ago in excavating a tank in his zamindari in Lot 10, P. S. Kakadvip, and represents (Fig. 12) the deity as wearing a long garland reaching to the knees and with four hands. The upper right hand holds a *chakra*, the lower right hand rests against a full blown lotus and is in *varada mudra*. The left upper hand holds a lotus and the left lower hand which also rests on a full blown lotus, holds a conch. From these attributes, it appears that the image can be no other than Vishnu. Two female figures in *Samapadasthanaka* pose are on the two sides. Their right hands are in *varada mudra* and the left hands hold stalks terminating in lotuses. The group stands on a plate the edge of which is decorated with lotus leaf carving. There is no *vahana* or devotee in the image. What adds considerably to the interest of the sculpture is the figure of a seven-headed serpent hood with a sprig over it which forms a canopy over Vishnu's head. A serpent hood canopy (without the sprig) occurs in a Vishnu image from Sagardighi, Murshidabad Dt. now in the Museum of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta (*Handbook to the Sculptures*, Pl. XXVI). There is no aureole and the back slab is flat at the top, with raised fillets on either side of Vishnu. The face of the image with part of its *mukuta* is badly damaged. It is decorated with many ornaments *e.g.*, *kundala*, necklace, bracelet, armlet etc. Two flying *Gandharvas* carrying garlands occupy the two top corners.

I add now an account of the Sagar Island which is a detached locality.

### Sagar Island

This island is situated in the extreme south-west of the Sundarban and forms P. S. Sagar. It is roughly triangular in shape being about 25 miles long from North to South and 8 miles broad along its south face, which is washed by the Bay of Bengal. By its west flows the Hugli river and on its east is the Baratala or Channel Creek, evidently, a length cut off the Halldi river (old Rupnarayan) by the Hugli. From its shape and position the Island appears to have been cut off the Hijli mainland by the Hugli river although it is included now in the Sundarban. In its north there are two small islands, Ghoranara and Lohachora, which are said to have been formed later. On the former is the telegraph station of Mud-Point, above which the Sunderban steamers leave the Hugli and pass down Channel Creek. At its south-western corner stands Sagar lighthouse built in 1808, and about the middle of its south face where a creek believed (as noted before) to be the mouth of the Ganges meets the sea, is the *sangam* or site of the great Ganga-sagar bathing festival (lasting 3 days) held at Paus Sankranti (middle of January) every year.

It is said that here stood the *asram* of Kapila Muni, whose wrath burnt King Sagar's 60,000 sons to ashes and consigned their souls to hell until Sagar's grandson Bhagiratha brought down the Ganges from Heaven to wash the ashes and liberate the souls as related in the *Ramayana* (Bala-Kanda, ch.43). This *tirtha* is mentioned in the *Mahabharata* (Vanaparva, Tirthayatra, chapter 114) the *Padmapurana* (Kriyayogasara, chapter 5, Bangavasi Edition) and by Kavikankan. Among historical records, it occurs in the Munger grant of king Devapala (9th Century A.D.) (*Ganda-lekhamala* Vol. 1, p. 42). According to H. H. Wilson (*Essays on the Religion of the Hindus* 1862, Vol. II, pages 164-169) there was at this site, a temple containing a huge stone image of Kapila with a large *bar* tree in front, beneath which were images of Rama and Hanuman, and a small fresh water reservoir called Sitakund at its back. It is said that these and other old temples etc., were washed away by the sea, probably in the earthquake of 1897. The present image of Kapila is said to be 'a shapeless block of stone' which is kept in Calcutta and sent down to the *sangam* and placed in an improvised temple at the time of the Paus Sankranti, every year (*Gazetteer of the 24 Parganas*, p. 256.)

The Sagar island was well populated in olden days<sup>8</sup> and Hedges notes in his *Diary* (1683) 'we went in our Budgeros to see ye pagodas at Sagore'. It is said that in 1688, two years before the foundation of Calcutta, 200,000 persons were swept off this island by a cyclone in one night (*Imperial Gazetteer* XII, p. 110). Reclamation work was begun early in the 19th century and in spite of ravages by sea and wind (*Gazetteer*, p. 257) much of the island has been cleared. In many of these clearings *e.g.*, Mandirtala, Bamunkhali, Manasadvip, remains of brick-built houses, temples, wells, tanks etc. have been discovered. In digging near **Sagar Light house** some years ago, Mr. Manuel the Superintendent found a novel golden ring, which had a human figure engraved on it. Traces of old wells also have been found here. At **Mandirtala** by the side of the Hugli river there are two old wells and a ruined temple and several brick mounds, one of which is about 40 ft. high. Near this is a large tank with banks some 40 ft. wide and 15 ft. high. There is another similar tank to its north where some old coins and gold ornaments were found which are now with Babu Devendra Nath Das, Zaminder of the place. At **Dhablat** east of the *sangam*, in the *kachari* of the zeminder, Babu Pulinbihari Dutt of Calcutta.

<sup>8</sup> In the island of Sagore which lies upon the extreme edge of the Deltaic basin consequently \* lying higher than the centre of the Delta, the remains of tanks, temples and roads are still to be seen, shewing that it was once densely populated. (*Calcutta Review*, 1859, The Gangetic Delta)

\* The elevation of the island rather proves that it once formed the part of the High mainland. It is not natural for the edge of a delta to be higher than its centre. K. D.

there is a Vishnu image and a Jaina Tirthankara image of black stone found in the island (with a stone Vishnu brought from Patharpratima in P. S. Mathurapur). It is said that the fine stone image of Ganga in the Yasoreswari temple at Jessore was taken there from sagar.<sup>9</sup>

Extracts from the *Chaitanya-Bhagavat* of Vrindavandas. Atul Krishna Gosvami's edition p. 383-386.

এই মত জাহুবীর ক্লে ক্লে । আইলেন ছত্রভোগে মহা কুতূহলে ॥  
সেই ছত্রভোগে গঙ্গা হইয়া শতমুখী । বহিতে আছয়ে সর্বলোকে করে সুখী ॥  
জলময় শিবলিঙ্গ আছে সেই স্থানে । অমূলিঙ্গ ঘাট করি বলে সর্বজনে ॥  
অমূলিঙ্গ শঙ্কর হইল যে নিমিত্ত । সেই কথা কহি শুন হই এক চিত্ত ॥  
পূর্বের ভগীরথ করি গঙ্গা আরাধন । গঙ্গা আনিলেন বংশ উদ্ধার কারণ ॥  
গঙ্গার বিরহে শিব বিহ্বল হইয়া । শিব আসিলেন শেষে গঙ্গা স্মরইয়া ॥  
গঙ্গারে দেখিয়া শিব সেই ছত্রভোগে । বিহ্বল হইল অতি গঙ্গা অনুবাহে ॥  
গঙ্গা দেখি মাত্র শিব গঙ্গায় পড়িল । জলরূপে শিব জাহুবীতে মিশাইল ॥

\* \* \*

জলরূপে শিব রহিলেন সেই স্থানে । অমূলিঙ্গ ঘাট করি ঘোষে সর্বজনে ॥  
গঙ্গা শিব প্রভাবে সে ছত্রভোগ গ্রাম । হইল পরম ধন্য মহাতীর্থ নাম ॥

\* \* \*

সেই গ্রামে অধিকারী রামচন্দ্র খান ।<sup>10</sup> যতপি বিষয়ী তবু মহাভাগ্যবান ॥

\* \* \*

প্রভু বলে তুমি অধিকারী বড় ভাল । নীলাচলে যাই আমি কেমতে সকাল ॥

\* \* \*

রামচন্দ্র খান বলে শুন মহাশয় । যে আজ্ঞা তোমার সেই কর্তব্য নিশ্চয় ॥  
তবে প্রভু হইয়াছে বিষম সময় ।<sup>11</sup> এদেশে সে দেশে কেহ পথ নাহি বয় ॥  
রাজারা ত্রিশূল পুঁতিয়াছে স্থানে স্থানে । পথিক পাইলে জাশু বলি লয় প্রাণে ॥  
কোন দিক দিয়া বা পাঠাও লুকাইয়া । তাহাতে ডরাই প্রভু শুন মন দিয়া ॥  
মুই সে রক্ষক এথা সব মোর ভার । নাগালি পাইলে আগে সংশয় আমার ॥  
তথাপিও যেতে কেনে প্রভু মোর নয় । যে তোমার আজ্ঞা তাহা করিব নিশ্চয় ॥

\* \* \*

<sup>9</sup> *Jessore Khulnar Itihas* by Satishchandra Mitra, II, 134. Some writers say that 'Chandekan' Pratapaditya's capital according to the Jesuits was in the Sagar Island (*Gazetteer*, p. 28) but this seems improbable as noted in the *Itihas* II, 143-160.

<sup>10</sup> This Ramchandra Khan appears to be different from his namesake of Kagazpukuria (now an insignificant village in Khulna Dt.) who is said, in certain Vaishnava works, to have ill-treated Chaitanya's colleague Nityananda and persecuted his devotee Haridas (a converted Muslim). He was probably a member of the influential family of Purandar Khan of Mainagar mentioned before.

<sup>11</sup> According to the late Saradacharan Mitra (*Utkal Sri-Krishna-Chaitanya* p. 8) this refers to the war of 1519 A. D. between Hussain Shah of Bengal (1493-1518) and Prataparudra of Orissa (1504-1532),



হেনই সময়ে কহে রামচন্দ্র খান । নৌকা আসি ঘাটে প্রভু হৈলা বিচ্যমান ॥  
 সেই ক্ষণে হরি বলি গৌরান্দ্র সুন্দর । উঠিলেন গিয়া প্রভু নৌকার উপর ॥  
 শুভ দৃষ্টে লোকেরে বিদায় দিয়া ঘরে । চলিলেন প্রভু নীলাচল নিজপুরে ॥  
 প্রভুর আজ্ঞায় শ্রীমুকুন্দ মহাশয় । কীর্তন করেন প্রভু নৌকায় বিজয় ॥  
 অবোধ নাবিক বলে হইল সংশয় । বুঝিলাম আজি আর প্রাণ নাহি রয় ॥  
 কুলেতে উঠিলে বাঘে লইয়া পালায় । জলেতে পড়িলে কুস্তীরেতে ধরি খায় ॥  
 নিরন্তর এ পাণিতে ডাকাইত ফেরে । পাইলেই ধন প্রাণ ছুই নাশ করে ॥  
 এতক যাবৎ উড়িয়ার দেশ পাই । তাবৎ নীরব হও সকল গোসাই ॥

\* \* \*

হেন মতে মহাপ্রভু সংকীৰ্তন রসে । প্রবেশ হইলা আসি শ্রীউৎকল দেশে ॥  
 উত্তরিল গিয়া নৌকা শ্রীপ্রয়াগ ঘাটে । নৌকা হতে মহাপ্রভু উঠিলেন তটে ॥

\* \* \*

সেই স্থানে আছে তার গঙ্গা ঘাট নাম । তহি গৌরচন্দ্র প্রভু করিলেন স্নান ॥  
 সুধিষ্ঠির স্থাপিত মহেশ তথি আছে । স্নান করি তাঁরে নমস্করিলেন পাছে ॥

\* \* \*

এই মতে মহাপ্রভু চলিয়া আসিতে । কত দিনে উত্তরিল স্তবর্ণ রেখাতে ॥

Extracts from *Chandi* of Kavi-Kankan Mukundarama. Indian Press Edition,  
 p. 201-202 and p. 237.

হরায় বহিছে তরি তিলেক না রয় । চিত্রপুর সালিখা সে এড়াইয়া যায় ॥  
 কলিকাতা এড়াইল বেনিয়ার বাল্য । বেতেড়েতে উত্তরিল অবসান বেলা ॥  
 ডাহিনে ছাড়িয়া যায় হিজুলির পথ । রাজহংস কিনিয়া লইল পারাবত ॥  
 বালীঘাটা এড়াইল বেনের নন্দন । কালীঘাটে গিয়া ডিঙ্গা দিল দরশন ॥  
 তাঁরের প্রয়াগ যেন চলে তরির । তাহার মেলানি বহে মাইনগর ॥  
 নাচনগাছা বৈষ্ণবঘাটা বামদিকে থুইয়া । দক্ষিণেতে বারানস গ্রাম এড়াইয়া ॥  
 ডাহিনে অনেক গ্রাম রাখে সাধুবাল্য । ছত্রভোগে উত্তরিল অবসান বেলা ॥  
 মহেশ পূজিয়া সাধু চলিল সত্বর । অম্বুলিঙ্গে গিয়া উত্তরিল সদাগর ॥  
 শ্রীনীলমাধব পূজা করেন তংপর । তাহার মেলানি সাধু পাইল হাতে ঘর ॥  
 সেই দিন সদাগর হাতে ঘরে রয় । প্রভাত হইলে মেলিলেন সাতনায় ॥  
 ছুই এক তরঙ্গী জলের মধ্যে ভাসে । মগরার কথা সাধু তাহারে জিজ্ঞাসে ॥  
 দূরে শুনি মগরার জলের নিঃস্বন । যেন আষাঢ়ের নব মেঘের গর্জন ॥  
 মোহানা বাহিয়া সাধু যেতে কৈল দ্বরা । প্রবেশ করিল সাধু তুর্জয় মগরা ॥  
 পদ্মাবতী সঙ্গে যুক্ত করিয়া অভয়া । দনপতি ছলিবারে পাতিলেন মায়া ॥

ANTIQUITIES OF N. W. SUNDARBAN.



1. Surya from Kuldia.



2. Nrisimha plaque from Kuldia.

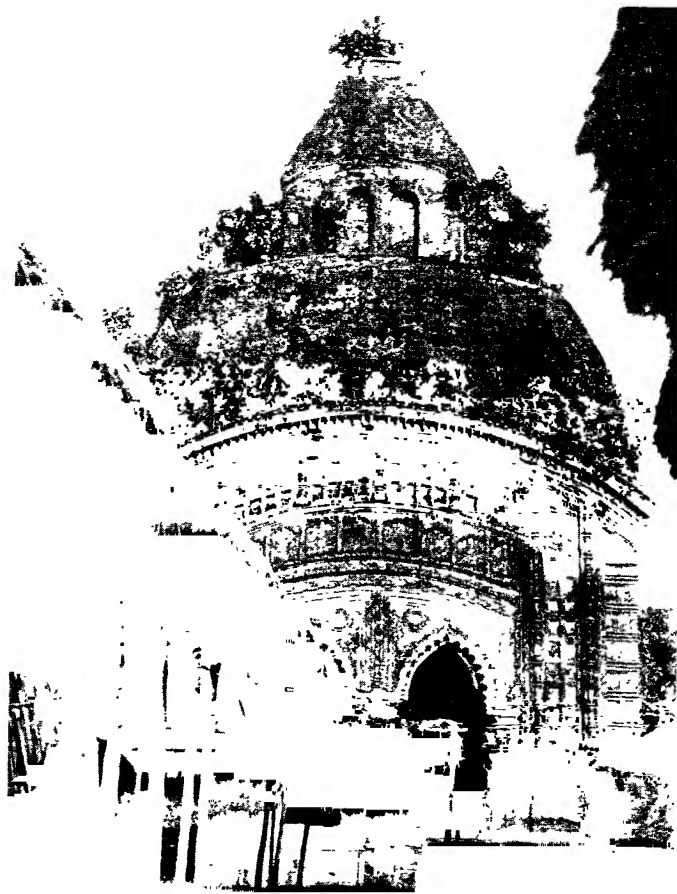


3. Parsvanath at Dkn. Barasat.

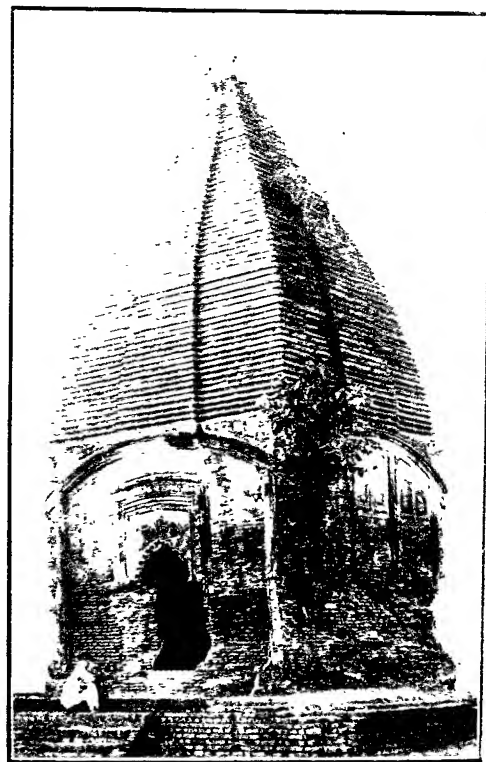


4. Ganes from Mayda.

ANTIQUITIES OF N W. SUNDARBAN.



5. Kesavesvesvar Temple, Ramnathpur.



6. Twin Temple, Jagadispur.



8. Sculpture from Ghetesvar



9. Adinath from Ghatesvar.



10 Garuda Capital from Jalghata.



11. Kuvera from Chhatrabhog.



12. Vishnu from Lot 10.

NEW SPECIMEN OF BENGAL SCULPTURE.

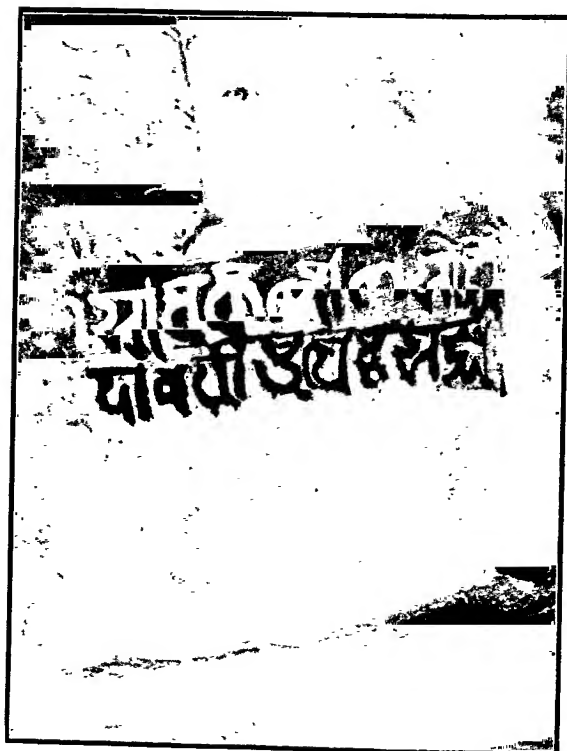
( Vishnu or Bodhisattva ? )



1. The Sculpture  
No. 661, V.R.S. Museum.



2. Dhyani Fig, at top.



3. Inscription on pedestal.

চণ্ডীর আদেশে ধান নদ নদীগণ । মগরা নদীর সঙ্গে করিতে মিলন ॥

\* \* \*

ঝড় বৃষ্টি দূর হৈল চণ্ডীর কৃপায় । ডিঙ্গা লৈয়া সদাগর দ্রুতগতি যায় ॥

ডানি বামে ছেড়ে যায় কত কত দেশ । সঙ্কেত মাধবে দেখে সোনার মহেশ ॥

সাগরসঙ্গম দেখি কাণ্ডারের রঙ্গ । কহে সাধু শ্রিয়পতি সাগর প্রসঙ্গ ॥

Extract from the *Rayamangal* of Krishnarama in *Bangalar Purabritta* by Pares-chandra Banerji, p. 18-19.

গাঠের গাবর যত, বাহিতে বড়ই রত, ছাড়াইল দুর্জয় মগরা ॥

গোজানা বাহিয়া চলে, কর্ণধার কুতূহলে, ধামাই বেতাই কৈল পাছে ॥

সারি গায় জুড়ি জুড়ি, কাকদ্বীপ গজঘড়ি, ছাড়াইল বনিকের রাজে ॥

টীয়া খোল পাছু আন, গঙ্গা ধারায় করি স্নান, উপনীত হৈল ছত্রভোগ ॥

অম্বুলিঙ্গ মহাস্নান, নাহি যার উপমান, তথায় বন্দিল বিশ্বনাথ ॥

বাঘ বাজে সুমধুর, বহিয়া রাজা বিষ্ণুপুর, জয়নগর করিল পশ্চাৎ ॥

সঘনে দামামা ধ্বনি, ভাবিয়ায় গুণমণি, বড়ুক্ষেত্র বাহিল আনন্দে ॥

বারাসতে উপনীত, হইয়া সাধু হরষিত, পূজিল ঠাকুর সদানন্দে ॥

বাহিল হাসুড়ি করি, চালাইল সপ্ততরী, খলটী করিল পাছু আন ॥

দুই দুর্গা ক্রমে ক্রমে, বাহিয়া হরিষে ডিঙ্গে, বাজে কাড়া বরণ বিশাল ॥

সাধু ঘাটা পাছে করি, সূর্যাপুর বাহে তরী, চাপাইল বাকুইপুরে আসি ॥

বিশেষ মহিমা বুঝি, বিশালাক্ষী দেবী পূজি, বাহে তরী সাধু গুণরাশি ॥

মালঞ্চ রহিল দূর, বাহিয়া কল্যানপুর, কল্যান মাধব প্রণমিল ॥

বাহিলেক যত গ্রাম, কি কায করিয়া নাম, বড়দহ ঘাটে উত্তরিল ॥

Extract from the *Satyanarayan* song of Ayodhyarama. MS, with Babu Sashi-bhusan Pathak, Dakshin Barasat.

কালীঘাট পরিহারি, বেয়ে চলে দ্রুত তরী, মহাস্নাননিত সওদাগর ॥

বাজে দামা দড়মাশা, বামে রহে গ্রাম রসা, গীত গায় গাঠের গাবর ॥

সাকুতাকু সারভাটা, বাহিল বৈষ্ণবঘাটা, করি সব হরি হরি রব ॥

বাকুইপুরের পর, রত্নাকর সওদাগর, সাধুঘাটা করিল পশ্চাৎ ॥

বারাশত গ্রামে গিয়া, নানা উপহার দিয়া, পূজা করিল অনাদি বিশ্বনাথ ॥

অম্বুলিঙ্গ হাতিয়াঘর, এড়াইল দড়বড়, গাঠের গাবর মিলি সব ॥

তার গঙ্গা পরশিয়া, কপিলেরে প্রণমিয়া, পূজে গঙ্গাসাগর মাধব ॥

## II

[Reprinted, with permission, from the *Modern Review*, November, 1929. An article identifying the image as Vishnu appeared in the *Review* for February, 1929, and was reprinted in *V. R. S. Annual Report, 1928-29.*]

### A New specimen of Bengal Sculpture

(A Vishnu or a Bodhisatva?)

Kshitish Chandra Sarkar, M.A., B.L.

The attention of scholars interested in Indian Iconography is drawn to a new specimen of sculpture acquired by the Rajshahi Varendra Research Society in its beautiful collection of treasures of Art.

It is a sculpture in relief on a stone slab measuring 32" × 15" in a fair state of preservation, revealing a fairly developed stage of art. The topmost portion of the stone slab contains the image of a seated male figure engaged in *Dhyana* or contemplation.

Superficially, however, the image in question may present some characteristics of a type of Vishnu, but, it is needless to say that such a combination with a Dhyani-Buddha, Amitabha at the top has not hitherto been found either in literature or sculpture as an undoubted type of Vishnu in the land of Vishnu worship. There is no place in this sculpture for (i) Vishnu's favourite *Vahana*, the mythical bird Garuda, nor is there any place for (ii) his consort Lakshmi and Sarasvati to his right or left. The pedestal, on the other hand, shows in a circular space a six-armed male figure in a pose of war dance. The main image has four male figures as companions—two on each side. The four hands of the main image hold four emblems but the lotus (*padma*<sup>1</sup>) and the mace (*gada*<sup>2</sup>) are not indicated in the usual way, nor in any such way as to indicate that they are the lotus and the mace.

The lump-like object in the lower right hand cannot, however, be taken to represent the lotus-bud as there are no spots to indicate the same. An object of uniform width placed in a horizontal position on a lotus stalk held in the upper left hand cannot possibly be taken to represent the mace (*gada*). To some it may seem that to the right and left of the image are the *Ayudha-purushas*,

<sup>1</sup> The lotus flower in the hand of Manjusri represents the teaching of Buddha.....the blue lotus .... is the special symbol of Manjusri and the green of Tara. The lotus bud is a more frequent form in China or Japan than in Tibet.

<sup>2</sup> 'गदादितान्' i.e., 2 *Talas*

(Hemadri's *Chaturanga-chandamama*, Vol. II, Vratakhand).

representing the discus<sup>3</sup> and the conch. Each of these standing figures carries a stalk of lotus and on it are placed the discus and the conch, but the illustration does not show that the lotus stalks are held in any way by the hands of these figures. The smaller figures by the side of these *Ayudha-purushas* remain, however, still unidentified.

The deity wears *Vanamala*, a flower garland of technical name, which hangs down to the knees. The [V. R. S. Museum image No. 662] of a Bodhisatva also wears a similar flower garland, clearly indicating that the *Vanamala* was not a monopoly of Vishnu in Indian sculpture. The discus or wheel (*chakra*<sup>4</sup>) and the conch (*samkha*<sup>5</sup>), favourite emblems held in the hands by Vishnu, are similarly not peculiar to him alone.

These considerations may raise a legitimate doubt about a definite and correct identification of the image under review. Images of four-armed Vishnu, divided into twenty-four types, arranged in four well established groups (*Vyuhās*) are well known in literature, and some of the types have also been noticed in the specimens preserved in museums and temples. The specimen under discussion with a *Dhyani* figure at the top does not, however, conform to any of them. An image is a spiritual diagram (*Yantra*) and its essential features are, therefore, regulated by ritualistic scripture in which there is no room for fanciful creations according to the whim of the artists. This makes correct identification possible in spite of all complexities of types.

*Ayudha-purushas* are personified weapon-emblems, and are, therefore, different from attendant deities (*Parsva-devatas*) and door-keepers (*Dvara-palas*). The literal meaning of *Ayudha* is a weapon of war of one of these three types :— (i) that held in the hand, while in use, such as a sword ; (ii) that thrown with the hand, such as the discus : (iii) and that thrown with an instrumental contrivance, such as an arrow propelled by the bow. In Indian Iconography, the word however came to include, besides actual weapons of war, some emblems which could not properly be regarded as weapons, such as the lotus, the conch, the

<sup>3</sup>. *Chakrapurusha* is described in the *Vishnu Dharmottara* as a male figure, with round eyes and drooping belly, this image of *Chakra* should be adorned with various ornaments and should carry a *Chamara*. It should be sculptured so as to indicate that it is evincing a desire to gaze upon Vishnu; and the left hand of Vishnu should be made to rest upon the head of *Chakrapurusha* (*Elements of Hindu Iconography* by Gopinath Rao).

<sup>4</sup>. *Chakra*, in Buddhism, it symbolizes "The Wheel of the Law" which turns twelve times, or three revolutions for each of the four Noble Truths. It is represented with 8 spokes or (multiplies of eight), indicating the Eightfold path of self-conquest.

<sup>5</sup> *Samkha*—The *Varahapurana* says that the *Samkha* is the destroyer of *Arilya* or ignorance. (*Elements of Hindu Iconography*)

Conch-shell—symbol of the preaching of Buddha as well as of the feminine principles. (A Getty's *Gods of Northern Buddhism*).

So it is not very unlikely that a type of Manjushri Bodhisatva—the God of 'Transcendent wisdom'—should possess a *Samkha* in his hand.



*Damaru* or drum, the book, and the like. The discus came to be represented in the Indian sculpture in two ways (i) as a weapon of war. (ii) as a mere emblem indicating the wheel or the reign of law. As a weapon of war, the discus is held in the hand in a way suggestive of motion; as a mere emblem, a state of stable equilibrium is suggested by its artistic treatment which invented a suitable device, a lotus-seat for the emblem.

The conch and the discus of Vishnu are noticeable in the head-dress<sup>6</sup> of his door-keepers Jaya and Vijaya; but the lotus and the club do not appear to have been used in that way. The *Ayudhas* or weapon emblems came to be given well-established human forms, and when such forms were given the symbols in the hands of the deity were superseded by them. Personified forms were placed alongside the main image and two of his hands, conveniently the lower ones, were usually placed on the heads of the personified weapon-emblems. *Ayudha-purushas* came accordingly to represent the *Ayudhas* held in the two lower hands.

If the two attendant figures on two sides of the main figure were intended to represent *Ayudha-purushas*, they would be *Ayudha-purushas* of the lotus and the conch, and not of the discus and the conch.

In the Vishnu images of known types, the main image has by his side, his consorts and door-keepers; and so two figures, one female and another male, appear on each side. In the illustration, however, are visible two male figures on each side, evidently indicative of companion-deities and door-keepers of the main deity. The *Dhyani* figure at the top clearly connects the image with Buddhistic and not Brahmanic conception. It may reveal a type of Manjusri of the Buddhists, a four-armed standing figure with a seated *Dhyani* figure at the top, and a lump of sweetmeat in the right lower palm, a wheel placed on a lotus in the right upper hand, a *Puti*-like (book-like) object with a flower on it or a flaming pearl placed on a lotus on the left upper hand, and a conch in the palm of the left lower hand. The six-armed male figure in a posture of war dance represents a class or a (*Gana*) of *Bhutas* and may commonly appear in all pedestals according to the texts:

**भूतप्रेतादिभिः कुर्यात् पीठासनमनन्तरम् ।—तन्त्रसारे ।**

Manjusri worship was at one time so popular that it received equally fervent adoration from Brahmanic and Buddhistic devotees. The *Trikanda-sesha* gives us twenty four names of this deity, two of which connect him with the

<sup>6</sup>. Head-dress—According to Canon quoted by Hemadri in his *Chaturvarga-chintamani* मूर्ध्नि स्वायुध लाञ्छनम्

wheel **अष्टारचक्रवान्** (*i. e.*, holder of a wheel of eight spokes) and **स्थिरचक्रः** (stable wheeled). His attendant figures and figures of door-keepers are well-known. As he was conceived as a bachelor and called *Kumar*, no female image in some specimens found a place by his side.

Munjusri was conceived in Indian painting and sculpture in two principal types,<sup>7</sup> as a warrior fighting against ignorance and as a "peace-loving dispenser of knowledge." In one type the sword or the bow and the arrow appear as fitting emblems, together with a roaring leopard or a lion as a *Vahana*. In the other, the wheel of law of stable equilibrium and the conch appear as fitting emblems of the peace-loving dispenser of knowledge. The *Puthi* (book) is his distinctive emblem and is noticeable in both types. The book is supposed to be *Prajnaparamita* which is associated also with some specimens of other Buddhistic deities such as Avalokitesvara, Cunda, Vasudhara and Pranjnaparamita as noticed by A. Getty in her work, *the Gods of Northern Buddhism*. It is represented in sculpture as held in the hand between the fingers or as placed on a lotus held in the hand by the stalk. The sculpture in question shows an object of uniform width in a horizontal position on a lotus seat held by the stalk in the left upper hand. The mace (*gada*) is not of uniform breadth throughout, it is not a short but a long weapon, and is usually held in a perpendicular position. Its representation in sculpture conforms to those characteristics. As they are totally absent in the illustration, the object in question cannot be safely regarded as a representation of the mace (*gada*). The eyes of the main image have more agreement with the Buddhistic than with Brahmanic deities and correspond to the type described by Waddel as a representation of a "dreamy look."

The ornaments also contain important indications which may throw light upon the question of identification. While almost all ornaments depicted in sculpture of Vishnu may be found in other deities also, the Kaustuva jewel is peculiar to him. It rose according to mythology from the ocean during its churning. It was a jewel of the variety called Padmaraga and was appropriated by Vishnu for the decoration of his breast as noted in the *Bhagavata* :—

**"कोस्तुभाख्यमभूद्रत्नं पद्मरागो महोदधेः । तस्मिन् हरिः स्थत्वा चक्रे वक्षोऽलङ्करणे मनौ ॥—भागवते**

This jewel appeared in sculpture as a pendant attached to the necklace and is noticeable in specimens of Vishnu images. This pendant is not exhibited in the specimen under review. Besides these, there are other considerations which

<sup>7</sup> Manjusri or Manjughosha as he is frequently called in the *Saddharma*, has two distinct types :—one with the sword and book, which is his more usual form and the other with the *Utpala* or the blue lotus .....the book may be held, but is more generally supported by an *Utpala*, surmounting it is sometimes a flaming pearl. (A. Getty's *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*.)

may raise a legitimate doubt about the identification of this image with Vishnu. As the image in question has a *Dhyani* figure on the top of the slab and an inscription on its pedestal, the two should be taken together into consideration for proper identification. The inscription consists of fifteen letters, viz.,

साधकः नालसी (सिं) ह.....सङ्ग (स्य)

The concluding word *Samgha* is indicative of the donor's connection with Buddhism. The image on the top of the slab, a small sitting image of a two-armed male figure in the pose of meditation is like Amitabha. Although "Akshobhya" is generally seen on the top slab of Manjusri yet Amitabha also is not uncommon. In *Buddhist Iconography*, Dr. Bhattacharya says "As a matter of fact, some consider him to mean emanation of Amitabha, others of Akshobhya, still others of the group of the five *Dhyani* Buddhas."

Brahmanic Iconography discloses essential features of Brahmanic ritualistic characteristics—the *Vahana*, the *Pitha-devatas*, *Parsva-devatas*, *Dvara-devatas* and the *Ayudhapurushas* which are worshipped along with the main image. Vishnu images have, therefore, to be worshipped with *Saktis* as *Parsva-devatas*, Garuda as *Vahana* and the distinctive *Ayudhapurushas* in the form of symbols of *Samkha*, *Chakra*, *Gada*, and *Padma*. The image in question has no female *Parsva-devata* or *Vahana*. Dancing male figure in the pedestal with Vishnu may seem to one as that of Siva in his *Samharamurti*. The presence of dancing figures in pedestals cannot be safely taken as indicative of any particular sect. Such figures of *Bhutas* and *Pretas* as these may be found in pedestals. Such dancing figures in the pedestal are also visible in images other than those of Vishnu (cf. No. 692. in the Rajshahi Museum). The six-handed dancing figure may be taken by one as the representation of Siva, perhaps in his fifth form of the *Tripurantaka* attitude. But in all the five forms of *Tripurantaka murti*, there should be only four arms and no more (*Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. 2. part I) and there should be the *Devi* to the left of Siva. The figure in question does not conform to either. Besides these, it is not likely that Siva or Mahesvara—the God of all gods—should be placed below the feet of Vishnu. In the representation of the Hindu Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesvara—they are generally found placed in the same row and not one below the other (cf. No. 400 Rajshahi Museum) representing chiefly Brahma with long beard and Siva with trident.

Next in support of the identification of the *Dhyani* figure at the top

\* For साधक, some may read स (सि) वक ।

of the slab with Brahma one may refer to some specimens of sculptures in the Mathura museum. In some of the specimens there are figures at the side of the halo. The sides of the halo may represent the *Vyoma-mandala* or the sky where gods, demi-gods, *kinnaras* are sometimes represented. Dr. Vogel has not stated definitely that such figures are the representations of Brahma and Siva and he has added "probably" in referring to all such specimens. One may lay special stress on the figure represented on pl. xvii (No. D. 6) in the *Catalogue of the Mathura Museum*, about which Dr. Vogel says that it "perhaps" represents *Vaishnavi* the female counterpart of Vishnu. Again, however, with regard to the same image in question and the seated *Dhyani* figure in the centre of the top of the slab, Dr. Vogel has stated as follows :—"In the centre of the top of the slab is a cross-legged figure of a *Jina* (?). . . . . seated in meditation (Skr. *Dhyanamudra*) . . . . . the sculpture seems to be the same as the Brahmanical female figure with ten arms" mentioned by Cunningham "as having been discovered in the Kankali Tila. If so, the sculpture is probably Jaina." So Dr. Vogel has also expressed his doubt as to whether the image should be regarded as Brahmanical or not. Further, the *Dhyani* figure on the top slab may not represent Brahma, for the conception of Brahma is generally that of a four-faced bearded figure with a *Hamsa* (swan) as carrier. These considerations perhaps may lead one however to accept this image under review rather as a Bodhisatva (be it a type of Manjusri or any other Bodhisatva) than as a type of Vishnu, although it may seem to one at first sight as a type of a Brahminical image.

*N.B.* In the last Fifth All India Oriental Conference held at Lahore, I availed myself of the opportunity of placing the photograph of this image before some of the veteran experts in Iconography in order to elicit their opinion about this unique sculpture, and I am glad to be able to say that some of them suggested that it was an image of Bodhisatva and not of Vishnu.

### III

#### A Tour in Dinajpur and Rangpur

Niradbandhu Sanyal. M.A., B.L.

In February last, when the excavations at Paharpur were drawing to a close, I was privileged to accompany Mr. K. N. Dikshit, Superintendent, Archaeological Survey, Eastern Circle, on a visit to the old site of Ban-Rajar-Garh or Bangarh and its neighbouring ruins, in the south-west corner of the District of Dinajpur, and some collections of mediæval sculptures at Dinajpur and Rangpur towns. This visit, though necessarily a hurried one, enabled me to acquaint myself personally with the localities and to examine fresh materials of interest for the study of the antiquities of this part of Varendra.

#### Bangarh

Occupying the very heart of Varendra, Bangarh, now a part of *maujah* Damdama, under P. S. Gangarampur, is only some 40 miles north-west of Paharpur, as the crow flies, and 16 miles south-west of Dinajpur town, from which it is conveniently reached by a road leading to Gangarampur, 2 miles further south. Here is a commodious Inspection Bungalow, where visitors to Bangarh can eat and rest.

The legendary history of these ruins associates the site with a thousand-armed demon, Bana, son of Bali. He was a worshipper of Siva, and it is said, swung for a thousand years, from hooks passed through the skin of his back, to win the favour of that God. The power which he thus achieved enabled him to fight even Krishna, whose grand-son Aniruddha had secretly married his daughter Usha, who had become fond of him in a dream (*Vishnu Purana*, Bk. V. ch. 32-33). Tezpur, on the Brahmaputra, in Assam, claims also to be the city of Bana. This only shows how well known names of mythology were foisted by popular tradition on different places of antiquity at different times.

There is, however, no doubt that Bangarh was an important place from very early times and it had more than one name : Banapura, Umavana, Kotivarsha, Sonitapura and Devikota (*Trikandakesha* II. 1. 17 ; *Abhidhanachintamani*, IV, 43). Available records indicate that the site was a flourishing city from the time of the Imperial Guptas to that of the early Muslim rulers. We learn from five copper-plate grants (*Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, pp. 129 ff), dis-

covered at Damodarpur, not very far from Bangarh, that under the Guptas, from 124 to 224 G. E. (A.D. 443-544), the city of Kotivarsha was the headquarters (*adhishthana*) of a district (*vishaya*) of the same name, under the *bhukti* (division) of Pundravarddhana. The District-officer (*vishayapati*) was appointed by the Governor (*Uparika*) of Pundravarddhana-*bhukti*. This nominee of the Crown, assisted by a Council of Four, conducted the administration, the latter, composed of the Mayor of the town, the chief of the Nobility, the chief Registrar and a representative of merchantmen. How long this system of local administration endured, after the fall of the Guptas, we do not yet know. But there is evidence to prove that even under their successors, the Palas, this *vishaya* continued under the same denomination and was subdivided into a number of *mandalas* (circles). No less than three copper-plate grants, the Bangarh grant of Mahipala, the Amgachi grant of Vigrahapala III and the Manahali grant of Madanapala, donate lands in the Kotivarsha-vishaya (*J. A. S. B.*, Vol. LXI, pp. 77—87; *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XV, pp. 293-301; Maitra, *Gaudalekhamala*, pp. 147-158). The *mandalas* mentioned therein are : Gokalika, Brahmanigrama and Halavarta. What the city looked like none can tell : only the casual notice of Sonitapura in the *Ramacharita* (III. 9) calls up a vision of its ancient magnificence, with temples thronged with worshippers and tanks smiling with lotuses. An inscription on a pillar from Bangarh, now in the palace-garden of the Maharaja of Dinajpur, refers to the building of a temple of Siva by a king of Gauda, of the Kamboja family (*J. P. A. S. B.*, N. S., Vol. VII, pp. 615 ff). In the said document, this temple is eulogised as an 'ornament of the Earth'. From the exquisite workmanship of the pillar, this description appears to have been hardly an exaggeration. Its date has, however, not yet been settled beyond doubt.

The splendour of the ancient city ended with the approach of the army of Islam ; the gods were broken, the temples were levelled and over their ruins were set up mosques with materials of the older remains. On the east of the Ganges, Diw-kot or Dib-kot (Devikota), as it was known to the Muhammadan historian, was the most important military post on the northern frontier of the territory of Lakhnawati, founded by Muhammad-i-Bakht-yar (*Tabakat-i-Nasiri*, Raverty's transl., Vol. I, p. 562 n) and formed the base of further Muhammadan operations in this direction. As Raverty notes, in these early days of Muslim rule, 'the city of Lakhnawati is seldom mentioned, while Diw-kot is constantly referred to by various authors' (*loc. cit.* p. 575 n). Indeed, it would seem, from Minhaj's narrative, that it was the chief seat of the Khalj

Maliks in their early days (*Ibid.* p. 578). The name of Devikota is associated with the last days of Muhammad-i-Bakht-yar, whose conquering career, on his return from the so-called Tibetan expedition, was cut short here by the knife of an assassin (*Ibid.* p. 573) in A. H. 602 (A. D. 1205). The seat of Government of the Khalj Maliks was removed from Devikota to Lakhana-wati (*Ibid.* p. 582) by Husam-ud-din Iwaz (A.D. 1211-1226) who connected the two cities by an embanked road, 'for this reason', as Minhaj says, 'that, in the rainy season, the whole of that tract becomes inundated, and that route is filled with mud swamps and morass, and, if it were not for these dykes, it would be impossible for people to carry out their intentions, or reach various structures and inhabited places except by means of boats' (*Ibid.* p. 586).

No mention of Devikota is made in Muhammadan history after this time. After the transfer of the capital, perhaps, it continued as a military station for some time longer, and then as its importance diminished with the expansion of the Muhammadan power in Bengal, sank gradually into insignificance. Little is known of it, under the successors of the Khalj Maliks, except what can be gathered from five stone-inscriptions, fixed to the walls of a mosque on the site, as noted below. These inscriptions, which refer to the construction of mosques and monuments (*dargah*) at the place, cover a period of a little over two centuries, ranging in date from A. H. 697 to 918 (A.D. 1297-1512).

By the time of the Mughals, Devikota appears to have passed into obscurity and is not shown on any of the Portuguese or Dutch maps of Bengal of the sixteenth or seventeenth century (cf. Campos, *History of the Portuguese in Bengal*, De Barros' map of Bengal, *frontispiece*, also *J. A. S. B.*, Vol. XLII, pt. I, pl. IV, facing p. 242). In Akbar's settlement (A.D. 1582), it appears to have been included in Havelee-Pinjarah, as the estate of the Dinajpur Raj was then called, and has since then remained incorporated within that estate, its memory being preserved now by its ruins and the name of the *Parganah* which is yet called Deokot (*J.A.S.B.*, Vol. LXII, pt. I, p. 211).

The city is fallen ! There is little of material Kotivarsha or Devikota that meets the eye to-day. On the eastern bank of the Punarbhava, known anciently as the Apunarbhava (Ramacharita, *M. A. S. B.*, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 47, v. 10), the site now occupies a desolate waste of ruins. It had long since attracted the attention of eminent European explorers, of whom, Dr. Buchanan Hamilton, who visited the ruins as early as between 1807-11 and Sir Alexander Cunningham who came towards the end of the century, have left detailed accounts

of the remains (Martin's *Eastern India*. Vol. II. pp. 659-665 : *A. S. R.*, Vol. XV, 1879-80, pp. 95-100).

Ascending from the Dinajpur road, we reached the *citadel*, girt by a quadrangular enclosure of massive mound-covered walls, flanked by the river on the west and a moat on the other three sides. The extent of this fortification, as Dr. Buchanan notes, is 1800 ft. from north to south by 1500 ft. from east to west. The general level of the land inside is high, relieved by a depression towards the south and two small eminences, one in the centre (called the Rajbari) and the other at the south-east corner.

A causeway across the moat leads into the *city*, occupying according to the estimate of Buchanan, an area of above a mile square, and protected, like the *citadel*, by ramparts and moats. The temples are there no more. The mosques and monuments (*dargah*) that replaced them are also gone ; the remains of only one now dominate these ruins. This is the monument of Sultan Pir, built in the early days of Muslim rule, on the site of a Hindu temple and with the spoils thereof. In the centre of this shrine are yet standing four granite pillars of the usual Pala type, each about 16 ft. high. The door-jambs used in the construction of the gateway are also taken from some Hindu ruins. Close by, are the pools of 'life' (*Jirat kundu*) and 'immortality' (*Amrita-kundu*), perhaps, associated with the older Hindu temple, of which the remains lie below. At the north-west end of the enclosure, there are the ruins of another shrine, the *dargah* of Shah Bokhari.

✓ About a mile south of the 'city,' in the Muhammadan quarter of *Dumduma* (cantonment), there is still another Muhammadan shrine—the *dargah* of Shah Ata—fronting on an ancient embanked road, which comes from Bansihari in the west and goes east to Ghoraghat. This building, raised, as usual, on the ruins of an older Hindu or Buddhist temple, 'is a square,' to quote Cunningham's description, 'of 26 ft. 10 in. inside, with walls 5 ft. 9 in. thick. The lower part of the walls, for three courses in height, is of coarse grey stone : all above is of brick. The dome has disappeared long ago. The western niche (*kiblah*) is very highly ornamented with carved bricks. \* \* \* In front of the tomb to the south, \* \* \* there is an open court-yard, with a room at each end. That to the west appears to have been the *chilla* or resting place of the saint while the eastern room was most probably his kitchen.' Outside this court, stands a broken pillar, suggestive, in style, of a Muhammadan adaptation of the older Hindu type. Within the mosque, Cunningham noticed a grave in the eastern half ; no trace now remains of it. There is, however, no doubt that this shrine



was originally a tomb and was subsequently converted into a mosque. Fixed in its walls, were found five inscriptions by Buchanan, which have already been referred to above (Martin's *Eastern India*, Vol. II, pp. 660ff: cf. also *A. S.R.* Vol. XV, pp. 97-100). From one of these records, we learn that the construction of this monument was commenced by Maulana Ata, and completed by order of Sultan Sikandar Shah, son of Ilyas Shah, in A. H. 765 (A.D. 1363), by Ghiyas "the golden-handed." From another inscription the building appears to have been repaired in A. H. 896 (A.D. 1490), during the reign of Muzaffar Shah. The final restoration, changing the *dargah* into a mosque, was effected in A. H. 908 (A.D. 1512) in the reign of Ala-ud-din Husen Shah, by a noble of his court, Khan-i-Azim Rukn Khan. The inscription which refers to this is placed immediately over the entrance door. Of the two remaining inscriptions, one, belonging to the reign of Kai Kaus, appears to have been removed to its present position from some other building on the site which had fallen to ruins. It describes the building of a mosque, in A. H. 697 (A.D. 1297), by a noble named Zafar Khan Bahram Aitigin under the supervision of Salah Jiwand of Multan. The other, of the reign of Jalalu-d-din Fath Shah, dated probably in A. H. 885 (A.D. 1480), is now lost, leaving an empty panel (for full texts and translations of the above inscriptions, see *J. A. S. B.*, Vol. LXI, Pt. I, pp. 102ff).

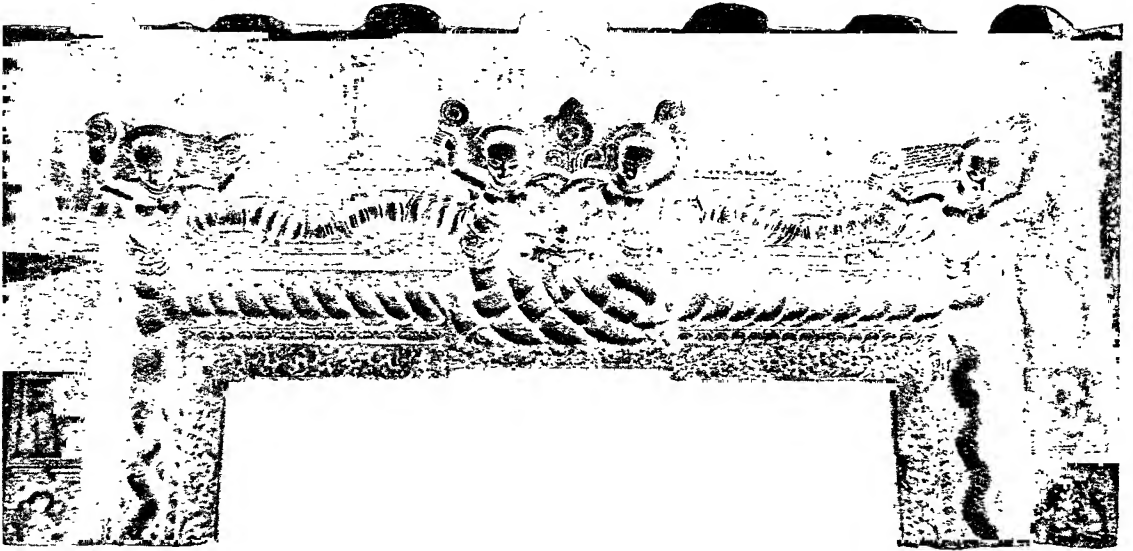
From the road in front of the shrine, a descent, paved with materials of old Hindu temples, leads down to a large tank, called the *Dhaldighi*, which is east to west long and is, therefore, supposed to be of Muhammadan construction. On the west of these steps is an old grave-yard, with chambers covered over with stones. Similar chambers, I hear, have also been found near the Gumti Gate at Gaur. A little to the east is *Kaladighi*, which, unlike the former is north to south long and said to have been named after Kala Rani, the queen of Bana.

The ruins extend all around beyond the enclosures, referred to, and even across the river to the opposite bank, where some half a mile from the city, is a mound called Ushabati (the house of princess Usha of the legend). Not very far off are the ruins of a Muhammadan shrine, the *dargah* of Pir Baha-ud-din.

#### Tapan.

At Tapan, 7 miles south of Gangarampur, is an isolated mound, locally known as Patharpunja. It is close to the famous tank of Tapan and rises to a height of about 30 ft. above the surrounding country, with a slope towards

BANGARH ANTIQUITIES.



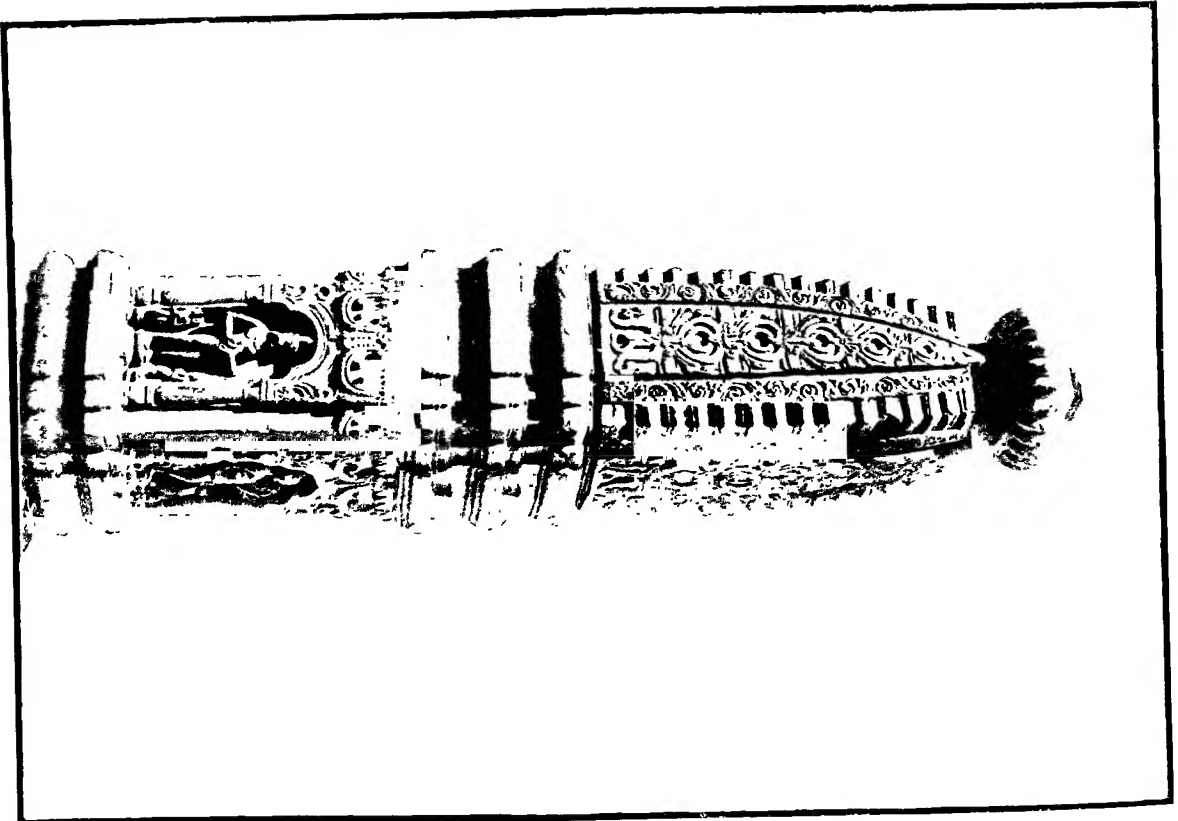
1. Top of Nag-dwar, Dinajpur Rajbari



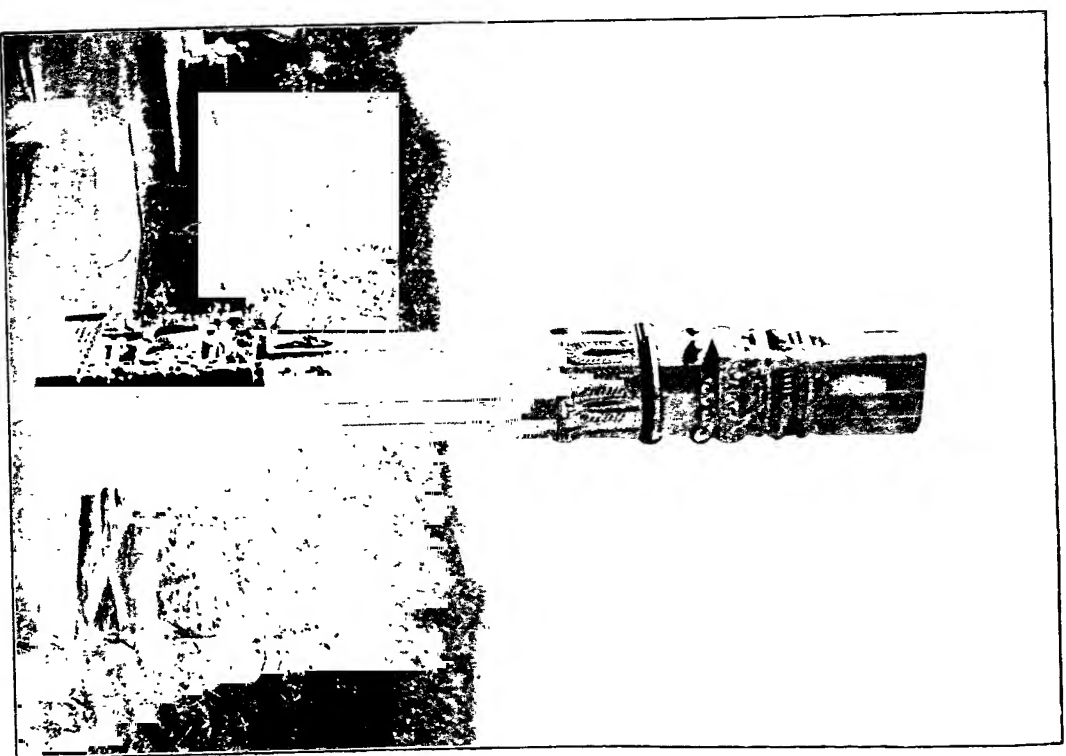
2. Garuda Pillar, Dinajpur, Rajbari.



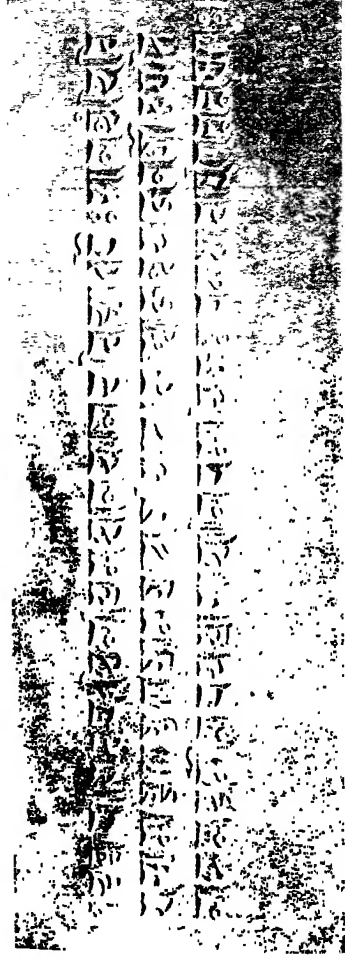
3. Top of Garuda Pillar.



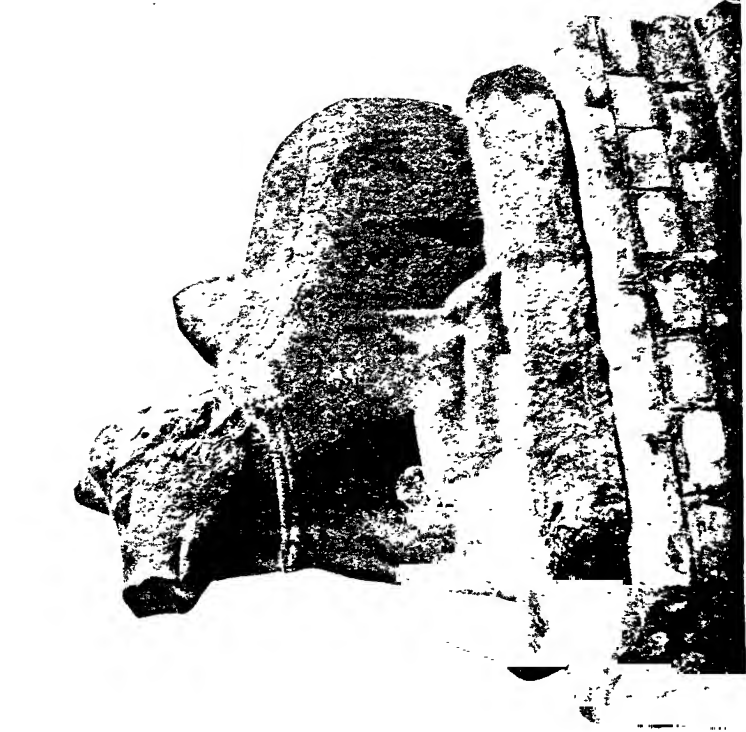
4. Votive Temple, Dinaipur Rajbari.



5. Kambojanvaya King's Pillar, Dinaipur Rajbari.

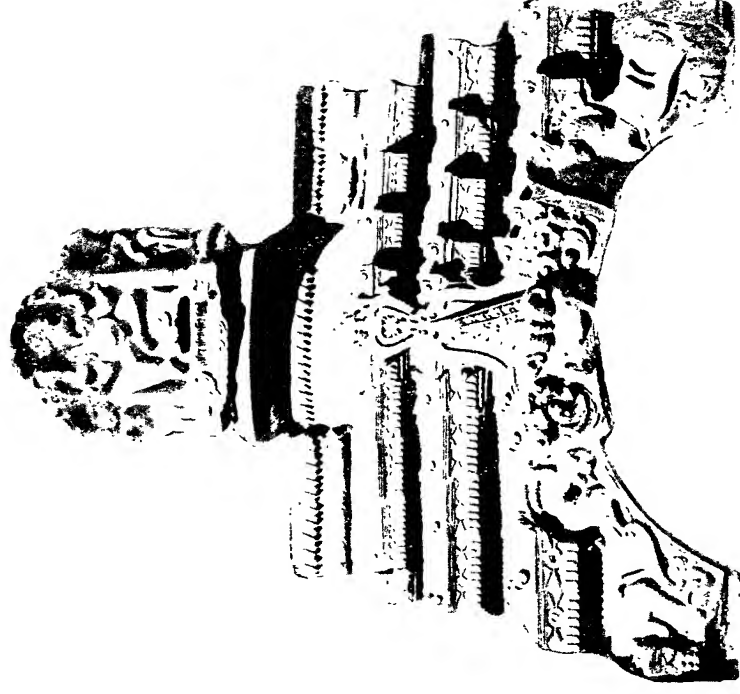


6. Inscription on Kambojanvaya King's Pillar, Dinajpur Rajbari.



7. Stone Bull, Collectorate, Dinajpur.

## BANGARH ANTIQUITIES.

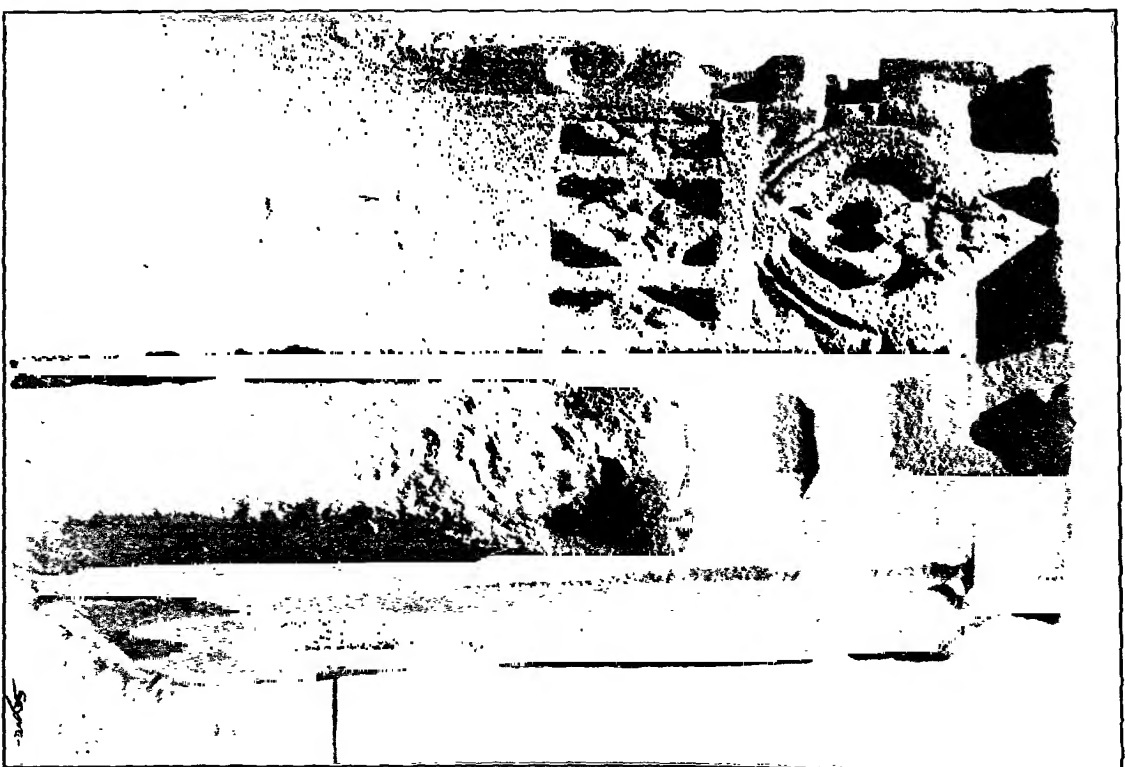


8. Kirtimukh, Temple at Namkan, Rajshahi Dt.

# BANGARH ANTIQUITIES.



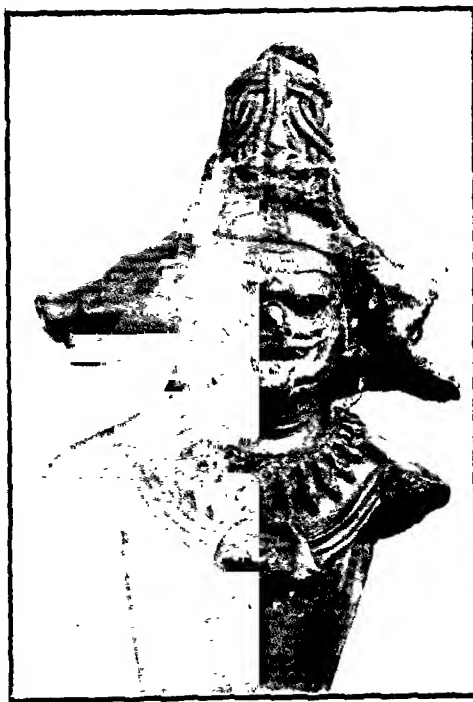
9. Lion Strut, temple at Namkan, Rajshahi Dt.



10. Pillar Base, V. R. S. Museum, Rajshahi.



1. Four-headed Vishnu, front.



2. Four-headed Vishnu, back.



3. Vishnu.

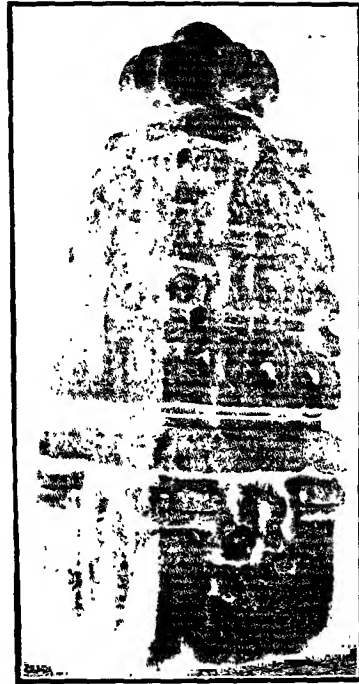


4. Sashasayi Vishnu.

TEPA COLLECTION, RANGPUR.



5. Uma-Mahesvara.



6. Votive Temple.

RANGPUR SAHITYA-PARISAD COLLECTION.



1. Miniature Vishnu.



2. Manasa.

the east. This heap must be of the ruins of a temple, as Buchanan suggests ; a few architectural fragments are still lying about. It is said that here Bana performed his austerities to win the favour of Siva. In course of re-excavating an old tank, to the north of Tapandighi, a copper-plate inscription of King Lakshmanasena was discovered in 1873. It purports to have been issued from Vikrampurā, to grant some land in the village of Belahishti, in Varendri, in the *bhukti* of Pundravarddhana (Majumdar, *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, pp. 99ff).

### Dinajpur

A lot of sculptured stones were removed from Bangarh to the palace of the Maharaja of Dinajpur by Maharaja Ramnath in the eighteenth century. The best known of them—the *inscribed pillar* of the Kamboja king—has already been referred to. There was a long controversy about its date. Some scholars would ascribe it to the Saka year 888 (*J. P. A. S. B., N. S.*, Vol. VII, pp. 615 ff). After examining the sculpture carefully, I found that the stylistic evidence raises a difficulty against this assumption. A detailed discussion of this question I leave for the present to a future occasion. Of interest is also the *cotive temple* (*sailagandha-kuti*) of Yasanara, inscribed in characters of about the twelfth century. This miniature is carved out of a single block of stone and contains, on four sides, four standing figures of Buddha, representing four of the chief events of his life. It may be compared with the temple of Brahma (No. 230) in our Museum. The pillars on either side of the entrances to our compound are modelled on it. The *Garuda-pillar*, standing in the court-yard of the temple of Kaliya-kanta is a fine sculpture. It is crowned by two figures of Garuda, sitting addorsed. There are some carved gateways, which have been used in the modern buildings of the palace, where they look sadly out of place. The finest of these is the *Naga-dvar* an enormous door-frame, 9 ft. 7 in. high : the jambs are divided into four compartments, wrought with dainty scroll-works of foliage and serpent-tail designs combined with other elaborate motifs ; on the lintel are figurines of four Naginis in the attitude of dancing, a pair at the centre and one at each end. At the base of the jambs of another doorway, there are figures of Lakshmi and Sarasvati, standing cross-legged, with their respective attributes, the lotus and the *vina* (lyre) in their hands. Another gateway displays Muhammeden diaper designs. Some broken monoliths and an image of an *eight-armed goddess* are deposited on the bank of a tank,



in front of the palace-garden. The goddess is seated on a wicker-stool, between two female attendants, one of whom carries bell and incense-pot. the other, a flywhisk (for further information see. *A. S. I., Ann. Rep.*, 1921-22, pp. 83-84, and 1925-26, pp. 113-114). This society, too, has in its collection two pillars from Bangarh (Nos. 64 and 69), one of which exhibits a novel type. These were collected by Kumar Sarat Kumar Ray, when he visited the ruins with a party of members of this society. An image of Bhairava, which they were unable to collect has, I understand, now found its way to the Indian Museum. A few sculptnres from Bangarh were taken by one of Maharaja Ramnath's officers, Jivan Brahmachari and built into a temple in his family residence at Namkan, Rajshahi Dist. A stone Bull recovered from a tank at Bangarh by Buchanan Hamilton's Pandit is set up in the Collectorate at Dinajpur. Some of these antiquities are illustrated in the accompanying Plates.

### Rangpur

*Sahitya-Parishad Collection* :—Having thus taken stock of the antiquities in the palace of the Dinajpur Raj. we came to the town of Rangpur. The example set by this Society and the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad of Calcutta, in the way of collection of antiquities, has happily been followed in other parts of the province ; some institutions and even individuals have built up collections of various size and value. One of them is that of the Rangpur Sahitya Parishad, which is now housed in a spacious building and includes some fifty sculptures, a number of manuscripts and a fairly representative cabinet of coins. In my note on the 'Additions to the V. R. S. Museum', 1929-30. I have referred to a miniature *Vishnu* in this collection. It resembles No. 500 of our Museum, but is of a more refined workmanship. I noticed also a *Manasa* of a rare type which is unrepresented in our Museum. She is four-armed, with boughs in the upper hands and a child and some small object respectively in the lower right and left hands (see Plate). A miniature *Manasa* with a child was found last year in the Pahapur excavations (for the *dhyana*, see Bhattasali. *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical sculptures in the Dacca Museum*. p. 227).

*Tepa collection* :—A number of sculptures has been collected by Mr. Nalinimohan Ray Chaudhuri, Zamindar of Tepa, at his residence, at Rangpur. Most of them, I hear, are obtained from Benares and its neighbourhood. A unique specimen in this collection is a *four-headed bust of Vishnu* (18" high), carved in the round, dating from about the twelfth century. The central face is human, the right and left heads are respectively those of a lion (Nara-simha)

and boar (Varaha), while that at the back bears the cognisances of Bhairava : gaping mouth, prominent teeth, scowling brows, beards and whiskers and a high dressed matted hair. This image has already been noticed by Mr. B. C. Bhattacharya on p. 8 of his *Indian Images*, pt. I, where the *dhya*na has also been quoted (cf. also *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*, No. 104, 1919, p. 60). Another *Vishnu* image (18" × 19") in this collection is of eighth century. In it Vishnu wears a cap-like crown, a *dhoti*, a scarf, a garland of 'forest flowers' (*vanamala*) and usual jewellery. He is four-armed : the two upper hands and their attributes are broken ; the lower hands rest on the heads of two kneeling Ayudha-purushas, Chakra and Gada, respectively, to proper right and left. On the reverse face of the slab, there is an image of *Surya*, with his two attendants Dandi and Pingala. Other notable images are : *Sesha-sayi Vishnu* (11" × 8"), *Uma-Mahesvara* (16" high) and *Karttikeya* (19" × 24"). In the Uma-Mahesvara image, Siva is three-headed. In the last image, Karttikeya sits on a cushion in the *lalita* pose, with his left leg, resting on a peacock's back. All above his waist is gone. The image may be dated in the eleventh century. Besides the above, the collection includes a *miniature temple* (5" × 8" × 7"), carved with figures of Siva-linga, Vishnu, Hara-Gauri and Surya on its four sides (see Plates).

## IV

### The Vaishnava Cult.

Syamacharan Chakravarti, M.A., Sankhyasastai.

#### Vishnu and Vasudeva-Krishna

Vishnu plays a very prominent part in the pantheon of the *Rig-Veda*. The word Vishnu comes from the root *vis*, which has two meanings, *viz.* entering and pervading. Both these meanings have been accepted by later theologians, who say that the God is so called because he has created all and entered into them. This interpretation is supported also by the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (II.6). The second meaning makes Him the Supreme God who pervades the whole universe, as indicated in a hymn of the *Rig-Veda* (I. 22. 18., Prasanna Vidyaratna's Ed. Cal.) This represents him as taking three strides to encompass the world. Another hymn (I. 22. 17) describes Vishnu as traversing the universe with three strides and says that the earth is sustained by the dust of his feet. Durga, in explaining this passage in his Commentary on the *Nirukta* (XII. 2) identifies him with the Sun and interprets his traversing of the universe with three strides as the diffusion of sun-light, in its three stages, corresponding to the three divisions of a day, *viz.* morning, noon and evening. These hymns have supplied the basis on which the story of the Dwarf incarnation of Vishnu is formed. The *Satapatha Brahmana* (11. 3. 5) makes him assume the form of a Dwarf for measuring the sacrificial ground which the gods were to receive from the demons. It also states that the gods were not angry with him for diminishing his form, because he was himself the sacrifice (1. 2. 13). According to the *Gita* (VIII. 4), the presiding deity of sacrifice is Vasudeva-Krishna. In the *Mahabharata*, (1. 1. 197), the blind king bewails that he did not expect victory when he heard that his sons had to fight with Krishna, who covered this earth with a single stride. On account of having taken these three strides, Vishnu is called Trivikrama in later dictionaries (*Amara*, *Nama-linganusasana*, I. 20). Thus it is clear that Vishnu of the *Rig-Veda* is identified in the epic with Vasudeva-Krishna.

#### Narayana

The 'Purushasukta' of the 10th Mandala of the *Rig-Veda* is attributed to Narayana Rishi. This Purusha and Narayana seem to be identical. The

*Satapatha Brahmana* describes Vishnu as covering this Earth, the air and the sky by his three strides (I. 2. 13) and has placed Purusha-Narayana in all the worlds, in all the gods, in all the Vedas and in all vital airs (XII. 3. 4.). The *Taiti-Aranyaka* (X. 11) attributes all the qualities of the Supreme Soul to Narayana and makes him supreme above all like the great Brahman. The *Chhandogya* (I. 6. 6.) mentions a Purusha in the solar disc, whose hair, beard and body are made of gold, and whose colour is as red as the back portion of a monkey. He who worships him is freed from all sins. Here, the red colour of the morning and evening Sun, which is like the back-portion of a monkey, is indicated. Sankaracharya identifies this Purusha with the Supreme Brahman, to whom *Aisvarya* or super-natural powers are attributed for the convenience of *upasana* or worship (*Brahma-sutra*, I. 1. 20). The stone-symbol of Narayana, which is yet an object of worship, appears to be a symbolic representation of the Purusha in the solar disc, in as much as the *dhyana* of the god, worshipped on that symbol, corresponds to that of the solar Purusha. This *dhyana* describes the god as seated in the solar orb, with his body made of gold. The conception of the golden colour is derived probably from the golden rays of the Sun. The wheel or circular mark on the body of the stone-symbol (*Narayana-chakra*) perhaps represents the disc of the Sun. Vishnu of the Vedic hymn, covering the universe with his three strides, has already been shown to be the same as the Sun, diffusing its light on all created things. Vishnu is thus the presiding deity of the solar region and is worshipped as Narayana on the stone-symbol. So Vishnu and Narayana are identical. Narayana is also identified with Vasudeva-Krishna in the *Mahabharata* (Santi, 338, 4).

In the *Mahabharata* (Santi, 335. 7-8) is told the story of Narada, who went to Svetadvipa (White-Island), situated to the north of the Milk-Ocean. There he offered prayer to Narayana, the Supreme god, who became visible to him and showed him his all-pervading form (Santi, 338-39). It is said that Svetadvipa may be attained by those only who recite the praise of Ananta, composed by Bali (*Harivamsa*, V. 14384). In the *Bhagavata Purana*, Svetadvipa-pati (the lord of White Island) is said to be a name of Vishnu (X. 6. 24). The story of Narada going to the White Island is no doubt an allegory. Svetadvipa is probably the Solar region which is the abode of Narayana, and, it seems to be so called because of the white light of the Sun. Narayana, who resides in the White Island is said to be the same as Hari and Janardana (Santi, 335. 17. 21). Thus the idea of the White Island as the abode of Narayana appears to have preceded the conception of Vaikuntha being the abode of Hari or Vasudeva. In the

later Puranas. Vaikuntha has been replaced by Goloka of Balakrishna. *Nārā* or water is the first creation of God (Manu, I. 8). Narayana is so called because the first creation, *Nārā*, evolves from him (Manu, I. 10). At the end of the cycle of creation, everything disappears except water, and at the time of creation, it is water which first comes out. So water is the *sesha* or the ultimate cause which is the abode of Hari. It is *ananta* or boundless. So the boundless abode of Narayana is the solar region, which looks like a milky ocean, on account of its white light. The White Island, therefore, is neither Syria nor any land of the Trans-Jordan region.

### Ekantika Dharma.

In the same epic, Narayana, the eternal soul of the universe, with four forms, has been represented as Dharma. The four forms or four sons are Nara, Narayana, Hari and Krishna (Santi, 334. 8-9). The two heroes Vasudeva and Arjuna are said to be the same as Nara and Narayana. The people of the White Island are described as Ekantinas (Santi, 347. 30). These Ekantinas are devotees of Hari and they attain the highest region (Santi, 348. 3). Their *dharma*, the religion which Narada got from Narayana at the White Island, is Ekantika Dharma. It is the religion of the Satvatas and said to be the same as was communicated in the *Hari Gita* by Vasudeva to Arjuna (Santi, 346. 11). It is also mentioned that the religion of the Satvatas is in keeping with the teachings of the Aranyakas, which also include the Upanishads. So it is neither un-Vedic nor un-Brahmanical, as has been supposed by some scholars.

The story of Narada may be a myth but it shows unmistakably the Brahmanical origin of the religion. The epic makes *Ahimsa* or non-slaughter of animals an indispensable part of this religion (Santi, 347. 12-13). The Vedic Brahmins became disgusted with the slaughter of animals and sacrifices and diverted their mind to the meditation of Soul or Brahman. The evidence of this diversion is traceable in the cosmogonical hymns of the 10th Mandala of the *Rig-Veda* and in the earlier Upanishads. The *Satapatha Brahmana* (II. 1. 5) gives a discourse about what is eatable and what is not eatable and appears to have a predilection for non-slaughter. The *Chhandogya* (III. 17. 4), represents Ghora-Angirasa imparting lessons to his disciple Krishna-Devakiputra regarding gift, sincerity, non-slaughter and truthfulness. So non-slaughter as a part of religion has been accepted by the Rishis from very early age. The Yoga philosophy has mentioned universal Ahimsa as a glorious penance (*Sadhana-pāda*, XXXI). Manu has preached *Ahimsa* as a begetter of great merit (V.

48-56). From long before the preachings of Mahavira and Gautama, there have been two classes of teachers among the Rishis themselves. One section maintains that sacrificial slaughter like any ordinary slaughter, begets demerit. The other section enjoins that though ordinary slaughter may beget demerit, slaughter of animals in Vedic sacrifices begets merit and leads one to heaven. The Sankhya and the Yoga schools belong to the former class and the Mimamsa school represents the latter. Krishna in the *Gita* takes the position of an arbiter between the two rival schools (XVIII, 3) and decides in favour of the latter (XVIII, 6), though non-slaughter of animals as a principle has been praised by him (XVI, 2). Sakyamuni, who was taught the two systems of Sankhya and Yoga before his attainment of Supreme Enlightenment, appears to have got the inspiration of *Ahimsa* from his Brahmin preceptors.

The Satvata religion is the earlier form of Vaishnavism or Vasudevism as we may call it, communicated by Vasudeva to Arjuna in the *Gita*. The scholiasts of Panini derive the word Satvata from *Sat*, i.e., the supreme Soul. So Satvata means a devotee of the Supreme Soul. In the epic, Narayana is said to be worshipped according to the Satvata rites. The Satvatas were probably the worshippers of Narayana or Vasudeva, both being the same in the epic. The *Bhagavata Purana* makes the Satvatas, the Andhakas and the Vrishnis all relatives of Yudhisthira and represents Krishna as Lord of the Satvatas in several places (I. 14, 25). According to the *Harivamsa* (V. 2200) the Satvatas, the Andhakas and the Vrishnis were born of the same mother. The same work (V. 1965) ascribes to Vasudeva-Krishna the leadership of both the Andhakas and the Vrishnis. In an aphorism of Panini (IV, I. 114) the Andhakas and the Vrishnis are separately mentioned. Patanjali derives Augrasena from the Andhaka name, and, Vāsudeva and Baladeva, from the Vrishni name. Devaka and Ugrasena were brothers. Devaka was the maternal grand-father of Vasudeva-Krishna (*Harivamsa*, XX, 23-24). So the Satvatas, the Andhakas and the Vrishnis were different clans belonging to the same stock as the Yadavas, being descendants of the Vedic Yadus.

The worship of Vasudeva-Krishna has also been referred to by Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador at the court of Chandragupta Maurya. His statement is that the Sourasenoi (the people of Surasena) worshipped Herakles and had in their land two cities, viz., Methora and Kleisobora. Methora is identified with Mathura and Kleisobora or Krishnapura reminds one of Krishna of the epic. Herakles is supposed to be the same as Hari, i.e. Krishna (*M. A. S. I.*,

No. 5, p. 157). The Mathura inscription of the time of the great satrap Sodasa, assigned to the 1st century A.D., unmistakably proves that it was the seat of the worship of Vasudeva. (*Ibid*, p. 169). From Mathura, which was the original residence of the Andhakas and the Vrishnis, they fled to Dvaraka in the Kathiawar peninsula to avoid oppression by Kala Yavana. (*Harivamsa*, vs. 1965-67).

### The Pancharatra System

The rites of the Satvatas are said to be performed by those acquainted with the Pancharatra system (Santi, 335-25). So the Satvata and the Pancharatra systems appear to be related to each other. This system consists of the worship of Vasudeva and his several forms, the four Vyuhās, as mentioned in the epic (Santi, 339). According to Ramanuja, the Vyuhās are forms assumed by the *Para* or Supreme Being for the convenience of worship and for such purposes as creation etc. These forms are all supreme and have separate powers. According to this system, Vasudeva is the Supreme Being, from whom Samkarshana or individual soul comes out. From Samkarshana, Pradyumna or mind emanates, and, from him, evolves Aniruddha or *ego*. Sankara, in his commentary on the *Brahmasutra* (II. 2. 42-45), has refuted this theory, as, in his opinion, it is un-Vedic in its origin. In the epic, the epithet *Pancharatrika* has been applied to Narayana (Santi, 338, 4). Of the four Vyuhās, Samkarshana is Baladeva, the elder brother of Krishna, Pradyumna is the son of Krishna, and, Aniruddha is said to be his grand-son. The worshippers of Vasudeva and Baladeva are mentioned in the *Niddesa*, a pali Buddhist canon of the 4th century B.C. (Bhandarkar, *Vaishnavism, Sairism and Minor Religious systems*, p. 3). The worshippers of Vasudeva are also mentioned in Panini's aphorism IV. 3. 98. Patanjali in his gloss on the rule has distinctly said that the word Vasudeva here refers to the god Vasudeva. Thus, Patanjali, who lived in the middle of the 2nd century B.C. knew fully well the supreme deity Vasudeva. His references to Krishna's attitude towards his maternal uncle (II. 3. 36) and to his destruction of Kamsa (III. 1. 26) show that the exploit of Krishna, who killed his maternal uncle Kamsa, was widely known in his time.

The well-known Besnagar pillar inscription supports Patanjali's interpretation of the afore-said *sutra* of Panini. In this inscription, we are told that a column, with an image of Garuda at the top, was erected in honour of Vasudeva, the god of gods, by Heliodorus, son of Dion, a *Bhagavata*, and an inhabitant of

Taxila, who came as an ambassador from king Antialkidas to Maharaja Kasi-putra Bhagābhadrā. This inscription is assigned to the first half of the 2nd century B.C. Here a foreigner is described as a *Bhagavata* or a devotee of Vasudeva, who is *deva-deva*, i.e., the god of gods. The Garudadhvaja indicates that there was an image of Vasudeva within the temple, with which it was perhaps connected. Curtius states that an image of Herakles was carried in the front of the army of Porus, as he advanced against Alexander the Great (*M.A.S.I.* No. 5, p. 154). The statement of Megasthenes regarding the worship of Herakles, i.e., Hari or Krishna, has already been referred to. It is thus highly probable that image of Vishnu was worshipped as early as the 4th century B.C. An inscription found at Ghosundi, in the Udaypur State, Rajputana, gives a description of a stone-enclosure, built for the worship of Bhagavatas, Sankarshana and Vasudeva, within the enclosure of Narayana (*Narayanavate*). As we have seen, Narayana is identical with Vasudeva, so *Narayanavate* may indicate the whole enclosure or compound within which the smaller enclosure of the two gods, Sankarshana and Vasudeva was built. Vasudeva and Sankarshana are mentioned as two separate deities, the latter being mentioned first. In the Nanaghat cave inscription of the 2nd century B.C. (Luders, *List of Brahmi Inscriptions*, No. 1112) Sankarshana and Vasudeva are mentioned as two separate deities and their connection with the lunar Yadava family has been traced. In this inscription, too, the name of Sankarshana precedes that of Vasudeva. This is evidently because he was the elder brother of Vasudeva. Even in the *Bhagavata Purana*, which represents Krishna as the supreme deity, Rama is mentioned before Krishna (X. 18. 9). Panini does not give Baladeva the rank of a god, but his followers are mentioned in the Pali *Niddesa* referred to above. His worshippers are also described by Kautilya, who speaks of their sacrificial beverage (*Arthashastra*, Sastri's transl. p. 425). The mention of this sacrificial beverage reminds us of the drunkenness of Baladeva, alluded to not only in the *Puranas* but also by Kalidasa (*Meghaduta*, V. 53).

Sir R. G. Bhandarkar maintains that Vasudeva is a proper name and not a patronymic (*Loc. cit.*, p. 11). But this opinion seems to be untenable in view of Patanjali's reference to Krishna's cruelty towards his maternal uncle, which shows that in his time, Vāsudeva was believed to be the son of Vasudeva. Otherwise, his comment on Panini (IV. 3. 98), viz., that in this aphorism, Vāsudeva is a name of the "Worshipful," becomes meaningless, in as much as the next *sutra* (IV. 3. 99) gives us the form Vāsudeva from Vasudeva. This interpretation is also supported by Kaiyata.



**Radha-Krishna.**

With the introduction of the *Bhagavata Purana*, the story of the boy-Krishna and his amorous overtures to the cowherd girls assumed a new shape. So long he was represented as associating with the cowherd girls in general. Now one cowherd girl is made his *pradhānā* or chief consort. But the earliest mention of Radha as his chief consort is found in the *Brahmavaivartta Purana*, whose date is uncertain. She occupies a prominent place in the *Gita-govinda* of Jayadeva, who was a contemporary of king Lakshmanasena, who lived in the latter part of the 12th century. Nimbarka was the first to give a philosophical exposition to the Radha-Krishna cult. He appears to be posterior to Anandatirtha, as his name is not found in the collection of philosophical works of Madhava, who lived in the middle of the 14th century. He was a Tailanga by birth and spent the latter part of his life at Vrindavana, where boy-Krishna is said to have spent his early life. His Vedantic theory is a modification of the qualified monism of Ramanuja. The inanimate world, the individual soul and God, according to him are distinct from one another as well as identical. The first two are identical with God in this sense, that they have no independent existence, but are dependent on him for their existence and action. But this cult did not receive much support from other Vaishnava preachers, such as Kabir, Ramananda and Tukaram. In Bengal the Radha cult got a greater impetus in the songs of Vidyapati and Chandidas. The preachers who elaborated exclusively the Bhakti cult of the *Bhagavata*, were Vallabha in the south and Chaitanya in Bengal, in the first half of the 16th century. Vallabhacharyya was a married man. The descendants of his seven grand-sons are now called Gurus. Chaitanya was a Sanyasi teacher. His ideas have been elaborated by his devotees known as Gosvamis in Bengal. He has been deified as god and is believed to be an embodiment of Radha and Krishna. The worship of God as a human being, giving him ease and comfort like an ordinary man, seems to be one of the principal daily practices of this sect.



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